

**NAVY-MARINE CORPS TRIAL JUDICIARY  
NORTHERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL**

**UNITED STATES**

**v.**

**NATALIE D. COMBS  
LT, USN**

**DEFENSE MOTION TO DISMISS:  
VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 37, UCMJ**

**7 DECEMBER 2018**

**1. Nature of Motion.**

The Defense moves this court to dismiss the charges against LT Combs for violation of Article 37, Uniform Code of Military Justice (“UCMJ”), 10 U.S.C. § 837 (2012). The pretrial statements and actions of the Chief of Naval Operations (“CNO”), Vice Chief of Naval Operations (“VCNO”), and Navy senior leadership constituted unlawful command influence prejudicing the accused’s the presumption of innocence as to intolerably strain the public’s perception of the United States military justice system.

**2. Summary of Facts.**

a. LT Natalie Combs is alleged to have been derelict in her duties as Tactical Action Officer (“TAO”) while onboard the USS FITZGERLAD (DDG62) on 17 June 2017. Charge Sheet.

b. LT Combs is additionally alleged to have improperly hazarded a vessel through negligence while serving as the TAO onboard the USS FITZGERALD (DDG62) on 17 June 2017. *Id.*

c. In August 2017, VADM Aucoin notified Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, ADM Swift, of his planned disciplinary actions based on the JAGMAN Investigation, including his intent to

impose non-judicial punishment upon LT Combs. Admiral Swift, in turn, notified VCNO, who informed ADM Swift that CNO approved the plan. At that time, VADM Aucoin was a general court-martial convening authority with full disposition authority under R.C.M. 306. Encl. C.

d. However, on 2 November 2017, following a subsequent collision involving the USS MCCAIN, CNO announced the case would be reopened and that ADM Caldwell, Commander, Military Personnel Detachment, Office of Naval Reactors, Department of Energy would serve as CDA to evaluate potential military disciplinary action for Navy personnel involved in the collision of USS FITZGERALD. Encl. V.

e.. While the review of the case was ongoing, CNO and senior Navy leadership made repeated statements imputing blame for the FITZGERALD collision on its crew members. Those statements are addressed specifically throughout the remainder of this Motion.

### **3. Discussion.**

Unlawful command influence is considered “the mortal enemy of military justice.” *United States v. Lewis*, 63 M.J. 405, 407 (C.A.A.F. 2006) (citations omitted). Where unlawful influence is found to exist, military courts have ordered “judicial authorities must take those steps necessary to preserve both the *actual* and *apparent* [emphasis added] fairness of the criminal proceeding.” *Id.* (citing *United States v. Rivers*, 49 M.J. 434, 443 (C.A.A.F. 1998)).

The UCMJ prohibits unlawful influence under Article 37, which provides, “No person subject to [the UCMJ] may attempt to coerce or, by any unauthorized means, influence the action of a court-martial . . . or any member thereof . . . or the action of any convening, approving, or reviewing authority with respect to his judicial acts.” 10 U.S.C. § 837 (2012). There are two forms of unlawful influence. It can exist as actual or apparent unlawful influence. As for actual unlawful influence, it “occur[s] when there is an improper manipulation of the criminal justice

process which negatively affects the fair handling and/or disposition of a case.” *United States v. Barry*, No. 17-0176, 2018 CAAF LEXIS 583, at \*14-15 (quoting *Boyce*, 76 M.J. at 247). It does not matter whether the unlawful influence was unintentional. *Id.* at \*18-20.

The Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces is also concerned with ‘eliminating even the appearance of unlawful command influence at courts-martial.’” *Lewis*, 63 M.J. at 415 (quoting *United States v. Rosser*, 6 M.J. 267, 271 (C.M.A. 1979)). Apparent unlawful influence threatens the military justice system because the mere appearance of unlawful influence may be as devastating to the military justice system as the actual manipulation. *United States v. Ayers*, 54 M.J. 85, 94-95 (C.A.A.F. 2000). The test for the appearance of unlawful influence is objective, focusing on “the perception of fairness in the military justice system as viewed through the eyes of a reasonable member of the public.” *Lewis*, 63 M.J. at 415. Furthermore, there is apparent unlawful influence when there may be a question whether the influence of command placed an “intolerable strain on public perception of the military justice system.” *United States v. Stoneman*, 57 M.J. 35, 41 (C.A.A.F. 2002).

The Defense has the initial burden to show facts that, if true, constitute unlawful influence. The initial burden of showing potential unlawful command influence is low, but is more than mere allegation or speculation. *See United States v. Biagase*, 50 M.J. 143, 150 (C.A.A.F. 1999). The burden then shifts to the Government to rebut the allegation beyond a reasonable doubt. *Id.*

If the Government fails to rebut the factual showing of “some evidence” of unlawful influence, it must show that the facts do not place such an “intolerable strain” on the military justice system as it is perceived by the public.” *United States v. Boyce*, 76 M.J. 242, 249 (C.A.A.F. 2017). To do this, the Government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that “an objective, disinterested observer, fully informed of all the facts and circumstances, would [not]

harbor a significant doubt about the fairness of the proceeding.” *Id.* at 249-50 (citations and quotation marks omitted).

**A. CNO engaged in unlawful command influence in this case by reopening it under the review authority of his own staff after he had already approved the original disposition.**

LT Combs is facing an unlawfully convened court-martial on the very same charges that an authorized general court-martial convening authority disposed of at Admiral’s Mast with CNO’s explicit approval.<sup>1</sup> Encl. C. This is one example of *actual* unlawful influence in this case. Specifically, on 18 August 2017, a general court-martial convening authority, with CNO’s approval, lawfully disposed of LT Combs’ case through Article 15 punishment. *Id.* However, a subsequent collision (three days later) in Seventh Fleet exposed reoccurring problems plaguing the Navy’s force generation model. Encl. G. This prompted CNO to reopen the disposition of LT Combs’ case as well as the cases of other FITZGERALD crew members. By selecting a review authority within his own staff, CNO effectively ensured that his and other Navy leadership’s performances would not be part of the review.<sup>2</sup> CNO’s decision to reopen the case after lawful disposition has negatively affected the fair handling of LT Combs’ case and resulted in unlawful command influence requiring dismissal of all charges.

Additionally, an objective member of the public would look at CNO’s actions and conclude that the timing of reopening the case right after the crash of another 7th fleet ship (USS MCCAIN), was the result of Navy leadership trying to shift blame from its highest levels of

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<sup>1</sup> In early August 2017, VADM Aucoin notified Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, ADM Swift, of his planned disciplinary actions based on the JAGMAN Investigation, including his intent to impose non-judicial punishment upon LT Combs and other FITZGERALD crew members. CNO explicitly approved the action.

<sup>2</sup> Under 10 U.S.C. § 5032(b) (2012), CNO’s office is assigned the responsibility for maintaining the Navy. Additionally, under Article 0405.3., U.S. Navy Regulations (1990), CNO has the responsibility to organize, train, equip naval forces and determine their appropriate manning.



authority despite the cases concerning the FITZGERALD already being disposed of. Therefore, the actions constitute apparent unlawful influence and undermine the public's confidence in the military justice system. The burden of proof must now shift to the government.

**B. CNO and Navy leadership engaged in a coordinated and unrelenting media effort casting blame for the FITZGERALD collision on members of the ship's crew.**

After CNO's unprecedented actions authorizing a member of his own staff to re-dispose of charges against LT Combs and other FITZGERALD crew members, his office issued a significantly misleading report on the FITZGERALD collision, which omits any and all institutional problems present in the Navy's operations that sanctioned the JAGMAN investigation.<sup>3</sup> Encl. T. These prevalent institutional problems are ones that members of Congress and others has previously laid at the feet of CNO because of his statutory and regulatory obligations.<sup>4</sup> Encl. P. Moreover, the report omits any of the errors committed by the crew of the CRYSTAL. Instead of presenting an accurate and all-encompassing picture of the factors contributing to the collision, CNO's report and press releases consistently pitted the blame on members of the FITZGERALD crew, "FITZGERALD's watch teams disregarded established norms of basic contact management and, more importantly, leadership failed to adhere to well-established protocols put in place to prevent collisions." Encl. T.

This effort to impute blame on the FITZGERALD crew members in order to deflect attention from the Navy's prevalent problems was consistent with the coordinated "story" engineered by

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<sup>3</sup> On 1 November 2017, CNO released to the public his own report on the FITZGERALD collision.

<sup>4</sup> On 19 September 2017, CNO testified before the Senate Armed Service Committee regarding the collisions in the Seventh Fleet, which included questioning from senators regarding Navy's failure to implement regular surface fleet operational schedules.

the CNO's press campaign.<sup>5</sup> Encl. Y. It included unrelenting statements casting blame on the FITZGERALD crew including statements such as:

- “Specifically, FITZGERALD’s watch teams disregarded established norms of basic contact management and, more importantly, leadership failed to adhere to well-established protocols put in place to prevent collisions.”

-CHINFO, *Press Release, 1 November 2017* Encl. T.

- “Failure to execute basic watchstanding principles, failure to properly use available navigation tools, failure to respond deliberately and effectively when in extremist [sic] of collision, a loss of situational awareness and high traffic density, failure to follow the international rules of the road.”

- CNO, *FITZGERALD Collision Public Report, 1 November 2017*. Encl. T.

- “With respect to the proximate cause of the collisions, there was nothing that was outside the commanding officer and the crews’ span of control.”

- CNO, *to assembled reporters following congressional testimony, 18 January 2018*. Encl. DD.

- “If you had seen the evidence that I saw in those cases, trust me, it was negligent.”

-CNO, *All hands calls from the Pentagon*. Encl. EE.

- “Q: Admiral, you’ve used the word “failure” many times, but you haven’t used the word “negligence.” Was there negligence involved in either of these accidents?

CNO: Yes.

Q: By whom?

CNO: Well by several people. I mean, we found that the commander [sic] officers were at fault, the executive officers were at fault. There were watchstanders on the ships. And

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<sup>5</sup> CNO directed ADM Caldwell, VCNO, and all the members of his own operational planning team, “Team, as we tell the story, let’s all agree on the releases before we pull the trigger. Alignment will be key.” Encl. T.

we've been pretty clear about identifying where there was fault and taking appropriate accountability actions, up to and including the 7th Fleet commander.”

*-CNO, Press Conference, 2 November 2017. Encl. W.*

From these repeated statement it is not difficult to understand why media outlets like ABC ran headlining stories such as “Scathing report blames crew errors for deadly Navy collisions.” Encl. V. CNO and others orchestrated a coordinated narrative of blame while an investigation was ongoing. Such persistent public statements by a top Navy official have eroded the effect of the presumption of innocent. As a result of this unlawful command influence, it is impossible for LT Combs to receive a fair trial by an unbiased panel of members.

An objective member of the public would see these statements and conclude that the Navy has already made up its mind in terms of the guilt and culpability of LT Combs. The public perceives these statements as influencing the review conducted by ADM Caldwell, a member of CNO's staff. No objective member of the public would think that ADM Caldwell wasn't meaningfully influenced by these statements of blame made by his superior. Here, no panel can fairly sit at court-martial because the panel would have to ignore repeated public statements, that assert blame, assign fault, and evaluate evidence, made by the highest of Navy authority in relation to LT Combs' case. This apparent unlawful influence casts such an intolerable strain on the public's perception of the military justice system that the charges against LT Combs must be dismissed.

#### 4. **Requested Relief.**

Defense respectfully requested this court dismiss the charges against LT Combs with prejudice.

#### 5. **Burden of Proof and Evidence.**

As the moving party, the defense bears the initial burden of proof to show “some evidence” of unlawful influence. If shown, the burden then shifts to the Government. Defense presents the following evidence in support of this Motion:

A. Media Coverage of Collision

Anna Fifield & Thomas Gibbons-Neff, *U.S. Navy destroyer collides with merchant ship off Japan*, Washington Post, June 17, 2017, at A10.

*Seven crewmen missing after U.S. Navy destroyer collides with ship*, Boston Herald, June 17, 2017, at 8.

Foreign Staff, *Seven crew of US destroyer missing after sea collision*, Daily Telegraph (London), June 17, 2017, at 15.

B. JAGMAN Investigation excerpts.

C. PacFleet-VCNO Emails, “Intentions on FTZ Accountability” (Aug. 9-10, 2017).

D. Media Coverage of VCNO Announcement

Idrees Ali & Tim Kelly, *U.S. Navy, citing poor seamanship, removes commanders of warship in deadly crash*, Reuters, Aug. 17, 2017.

Ryan Browne, *USS Fitzgerald’s leadership removed from their duties over June collision*, CNN, Aug. 18, 2017.

Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Fitzgerald’s CO and sailors standing watch face discipline in fatal collision*, Navy Times, Aug. 17, 2017.

Eric Schmitt, *Top two officers on Navy ship in deadly collision off Japan are relieved of duties*, New York Times, Aug. 17, 2017.

Richard Sisk, *Navy Fires Commander, XO from USS Fitzgerald for Fatal Collision*, Military.com, Aug. 17, 2017.

E. Emails Tracking VCNO Availability (Aug. 17, 2017).

F. U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs, *7th Fleet Announces USS Fitzgerald Accountability Determinations*, (Aug. 17, 2017).

G. Media Coverage of MCCAIN collision

Max Jaeger, *Navy tragedy Sailors missing in sea collision*, New York Post, Aug. 21, 2017, at A19.

Sam Holmes & Lesley Wroughton, *US Navy crash: 10 sailors missing after destroyer USS John McCain collides with oil tanker off Singapore; Accident comes after USS Fitzgerald involved in fatal collision*, The Independent (United Kingdom), Aug. 21, 2017. 27

H. *VIDEO: CNO Announces Operational Pause, Investigation Following USS John McCain Collision*, USNI News, Aug. 21, 2017.

I. CR Order (Aug. 24, 2017).

J. Facebook Live All-Hands Call Transcript (Aug. 30, 2017).

K. CNO's Sailing Directions and Design for Maritime Superiority.

L. Intentionally Omitted.

M. Intentionally Omitted.

N. VCNO HASC Testimony Excerpts.

O. Media Coverage of HASC Testimony

Jeanette Steele, *Navy gets grilled by House committee regarding deadly collisions*, San Diego Union-Tribune, Sept. 7, 2017.

Jeremy Herb & Barbara Starr, *Congress grills Navy on ship collisions*, CNN, Sept. 7, 2017.

P. CNO SASC Testimony Excerpts.

Q. Media Coverage of CNO's Testimony

Ryan Browne, *Navy secretary on recent fatal accidents: 'We have a problem'*, CNN, Sept. 19, 2017.

Travis J. Tritten, *John McCain: Navy leaders knew about problems years before deadly ship collisions*, Examiner (Washington, DC) Sept. 19, 2017.

Helene Cooper, *Navy Leaders Pledge to Solve Problems Stretching Limits of Sailors*, New York Times, Sept. 19, 2017.

Claudia Grisales, *Senators grill Navy officials on crashes, Sailors' deaths*, Stars & Stripes, Sept. 19, 2017.

R. CDA Order (Oct. 30, 2017).

S. Intentionally Omitted.

T. Navy Office of Information, *Navy Releases Collision Report for USS Fitzgerald and USS John S McCain Collisions*, Nov. 1, 2017, and CNO's Public Collision Report (excerpts).

U. Navy Office of Information, *Navy Releases Results of the Comprehensive Review of Surface Force Incidents*, Nov. 2, 2017, and Comprehensive Review (excerpts).

V. Luis Martinez, *Scathing report blames crew errors for deadly Navy collisions*, ABC News, Nov. 1, 2011.

W. Dept. of Def. Press Operations, *Department of Defense Press Briefing by Adm. Richardson on results of the Fleet Comprehensive Review and investigations into the collisions involving USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain*, Nov. 2, 2017 (pp. 1-2, 11).

X. CDA Memorandum for the Record (Nov. 13, 2017).

Y. CDA, VCNO, CNO Emails (January 2018).

Z. Navy Office of Information, *US Navy Statement on USS Fitzgerald and USS John S McCain Consolidated Disposition Authority Accountability Actions*, Jan. 16, 2018.

AA. Media Coverage of the Charges against FITZGERALD Commanding Officer

Thomas Gibbons-Neff, *Navy Seeks to Prosecute Top Officers for Crashes*, New York Times, Jan. 16, 2017.

*Navy filing homicide charges against two ship commanders*, Baltimore Sun, Jan. 17, 2018.

Dan Lamothe, *Navy files charges over ship collisions*, New York Times, Jan. 17, 2018, at A13.

BB. Megan Eckstein, *Wittman Previews HASC Hearing on Navy Readiness Reviews, Punishments After Fatal Ship Collisions*, USNI, Jan. 17, 2018.

CC. Blumenthal Statement on Investigation into Charges Against Commanders of USS Fitzgerald And USS John S. McCain, Jan. 16, 2018.

DD. Megan Eckstein, *Navy, Congress, Looking to Clarify Command and Control of U.S. Pacific Fleet*, USNI News, Jan. 18, 2018.

EE. All Hands Email (17 Jan 18).

FF. CNO Email to RADM Cox (9 Mar 18).

GG. Senior Navy Leader Biographies.

HH. CHINFO Press Release (8 May18).

## 6. **Evidentiary Hearing & Oral Argument.**

The Defense requests an evidentiary hearing and oral argument.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Sheldon  
Civilian Defense Counsel

## ***U.S. Navy destroyer collides with merchant ship off Japan***

The Washington Post

June 17, 2017 Saturday, Met 2 Edition

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**Distribution:** Every Zone

**Section:** A-SECTION; Pg. A10

**Length:** 456 words

**Byline:** Anna Fifield; Thomas Gibbons-Neff

**Dateline:** TOKYO

### **Body**

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Commanding officer airlifted to hospital; 7 sailors reported missing

TOKYO - Seven U.S. Navy sailors are missing off the coast of Japan after an Aegis guided missile destroyer, the **USS Fitzgerald**, collided with a container ship early Saturday, causing significant damage and flooding.

Three sailors, including the destroyer's commanding officer, Cmdr. Bryce Benson, were evacuated from the damaged vessel and are being treated at the U.S. naval hospital at Yokosuka, the home of the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet.

Benson was reported to be in stable condition in the hospital, while the other two were still having their injuries assessed. The Seventh Fleet had set up an information center for families of sailors serving on the ship.

The cause of the collision was not yet clear.

"Right now we are focused on two things: the safety of the ship and the well-being of the sailors," said Adm. Scott Swift, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The **USS** Dewey, another destroyer, and two naval tugboats were at the scene, about 12 miles from the Izu Peninsula and 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, searching for the missing sailors on Saturday. Two Japanese coast guard cutters with helicopters were helping.

The **Fitzgerald**, which is more than 500 feet long, collided with a fully laden, Philippine-flagged container ship, the ACX Crystal, about 2:30 a.m. local time.

The Crystal is about 700 feet long and was bound for Tokyo, according to a website that tracks maritime traffic.

Local broadcaster NHK showed helicopter footage of the container ship with minor damage to its bow, while the **Fitzgerald** appeared to have significant damage above and below the waterline. Water was being pumped from aboard the Navy ship.

## U.S. Navy destroyer collides with merchant ship off Japan

The **Fitzgerald** is part of the Yokosuka-based group that includes the aircraft carrier **USS** Ronald Reagan, but it was operating independently of the carrier when the collision occurred, Flanders said.

The **Fitzgerald** was operating under its own power after the collision, but was making only one to three miles per hour.

When its crew is at full strength, the **Fitzgerald** usually has more than 250 personnel aboard and can reach speeds well over 30 miles per hour. It is unclear how fast the destroyer was traveling when it and the merchant ship collided.

Also unclear was how the two massive vessels collided.

There are extensive international guidelines for accident avoidance at sea known as the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, or Colregs.

The rules require that ships must have a watch posted at all times and follow a number of collision-avoidance steps when crossing paths with or overtaking other vessels.

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Gibbons-Neff reported from Washington.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2017

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## **Seven crewmen missing after U.S. Navy destroyer collides with ship**

The Boston Herald

June 17, 2017 Saturday, All Editions

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**Section:** NEWS; Local; Pg. 8; Vol. 35; No. 168

**Length:** 357 words

### **Body**

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TOKYO — Seven crew members are reportedly missing and one injured after a U.S. Navy destroyer collided early yesterday morning with a merchant ship off the coast of Japan, the country's coast guard reported.

Footage from the Japanese TV network NHK showed heavy damage to the mid-right side of the Navy ship and a person in a stretcher being lifted to a helicopter.

The U.S. 7th Fleet said on its Facebook page that it is working with the Japanese Coast Guard to conduct a medical evacuation for a sailor. The fleet said the number of injuries is still being determined.

The Japanese Coast Guard said it received an emergency call from a Philippine-registered container ship ACX Crystal at around 2:20 a.m. that it had collided with the **USS Fitzgerald** southwest of Yokosuka, Japan.

Coast Guard spokesman Yuichi Sugino said coast guard patrol ships and aircraft were headed to the scene but said that no further details were immediately available.

The Philippine ship is 29,060 tons and is 730 feet long, the coast guard said.

The Navy said that the **USS Fitzgerald** collided with a merchant ship 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, a city south of Tokyo that is home to a major U.S. Naval base. A U.S. defense official said there is flooding in three compartments of the **Fitzgerald**.

The 7th Fleet says the ship experienced flooding in some areas and it is heading back to Yokosuka. The fleet said the **Fitzgerald** has limited propulsion, and the ship sustained damage on the starboard side below the water line.

The fleet said the **USS** Dewey, medical assistance and two Navy tugs were being dispatched as quickly as possible and that Naval aircraft were being readied to help.

The Pacific Fleet said the extent of injuries and damage to the **Fitzgerald** are being determined, and the incident is under investigation.

Relatives of crew members of the **Fitzgerald** were awaiting news of their loved ones last night.

Rita Schrimsher of Athens, Ala., said "of course we're nervous and scared and just praying."

Her grandson Jackson Schrimsher is a 23-year-old sailor aboard the destroyer. She said she last communicated with him via Facebook messenger on Wednesday.

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2017

## **Seven crew of US destroyer missing after sea collision**

The Daily Telegraph (London)

June 17, 2017 Saturday, Edition 3, National Edition

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### **The Daily Telegraph**

**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 15

**Length:** 250 words

**Byline:** Our Foreign Staff

### **Body**

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SEVEN crew members of a US destroyer were reportedly missing last night following a collision with a merchant ship off the Japanese coast.

The collision, which involved the **USS Fitzgerald**, took place 56 nautical miles south-west of Yokosuka, in eastern Japan.

According to a US defence department official, three compartments of the **Fitzgerald** were flooded.

The spokesman said there had been injuries as a result of the accident.

According to Japan broadcaster NHK, seven members of the crew were unaccounted for following the accident.

Footage taken by the broadcaster showed damage to the right of the hull of the 505ft destroyer.

According to the station, the **Fitzgerald** collided with ACX Crystal, a Philippine container ship.

In a brief written statement, US Pacific Fleet in Hawaii said the navy had requested assistance from the Japanese coastguard, including helping with the evacuation of one of those injured in the collision.

The fleet added that the extent of injuries and damage to the **Fitzgerald** were "being determined" and that the incident was under investigation.

The **USS Fitzgerald** is an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, which was commissioned in 1995.

It is based in Yokosuka and its crew numbers 23 officers, 24 chief petty officers and 291 enlisted members of the navy.

Despite the collision, the **Fitzgerald** was making its way back to Yokosuka without assistance.

However, the **USS** Dewey and two navy tugs were sent to the area, with aircraft being prepared to assist if necessary.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2017

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5830

28 Jul 17

[**SECRET/NOFORN** – Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (21, 29, 64, 69, 79, 80, 82, 101, 103, 225-228, 242-246, 248)]

From: RDML Brian Fort, USN, Investigating Officer  
To: Office of the Judge Advocate General (Code 11)  
Via: (1) Commander, U.S. SEVENTH Fleet  
(2) Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: INVESTIGATION INTO THE COLLISION AT SEA BETWEEN USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) AND ACX CRYSTAL ON OR ABOUT 17 JUN 2017

Ref: (a) JAG Instruction 5800.7F (JAGMAN)  
(b) Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS)  
(c) COMNAVSURFPACINST 3530.4E dtd 31Oct16, Surface Ship Navigation Department Organization and Regulations Manual (NAVDORM)  
(d) Publication 158, Sailing Directions Japan Volume I  
(e) Publication 120, Sailing Directions (Planning Guide), Pacific Ocean and Southeast Asia  
(f) OPNAV Instruction 3120.32(D) dtd 16Jul12, Standard Organization and Regulations of the U.S. Navy (SORM)  
(g) OPOD 201  
(h) COMNAVSURFPAC/COMNAVSURFLANTINST 3505.1A dtd 12Dec16, Navigation Seamanship and Ship Handling Training  
(i) COMNAVSURFPAC/COMNAVSURFLANTINST 3502.3A dtd 8Nov16, Surface Force Readiness Manual  
(j) OPNAVINST 5100.19 dtd 30May07, Navy Safety And Occupational Health (SOH) Program Manual For Forces Afloat  
(k) OPNAVINST 5354.1F dtd 20Sep11, Navy Equal Opportunity Policy  
(l) OPNAVINST 3100.7C dtd 24Feb14, Preparing, Maintaining And Submitting The Ship's Deck Log

Encl: (1) COMSEVENTHFLT ltr 5830 Ser N013/0104J of 20Jun17  
(2) COMSEVENTHFLT ltr 5830 Ser N013/0111J of 24Jun17  
(3) COMSEVENTHFLT ltr 5830 Ser N013/0112J of 29Jun17  
(4) COMSEVENTHFLT ltr 5830 Ser N013/0116J of 13Jul17  
(5) COMSEVENTHFLT ltr 5830 Ser N013/0121J of 18Jul17  
(6) List of Witnesses Interviewed  
(7) Roster of Investigation Team Personnel  
(8) 1994 Navigation Light Certificate of Alternate Compliance

[**SECRET/NOFORN** – Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (21, 29, 64, 69, 79, 80, 82, 101, 103, 225-228, 242-246, 248)]

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Subj: INVESTIGATION INTO THE COLLISION AT SEA BETWEEN USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) AND ACX CRYSTAL ON OR ABOUT 17 JUN 2017

- F. Collision
- G. Post Collision Events, Return to Yokosuka, and Recovery
- H. Damages and Damage Control Efforts
- I. Berthing 2 Narrative
- J. Medical
- K. Manning Concerns
- L. Training Concerns
- M. Equipment Concerns
- N. FTZ Command Culture
- III. Opinions
  - A. Root Causes of the Collision
  - B. Contributing Causes of the Collision
  - C. Command Culture Contributions to the Collision
  - D. Other Opinions – Not Causal or Contributing to the Collision
- IV. Recommendations
  - A. Immediate Actions
  - B. Building More Capable Mariners (Navigation/Seamanship)
  - C. Improving Core Navigation Competencies
  - D. War at Sea Readiness
  - E. Accountability
  - F. Meritorious Service

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OVERVIEW**

At 0130 on 17 June 2017, FTZ collided with CRYSTAL in the vicinity of the eastern boundary of the Mikomoto Shima Voluntary Traffic Separation Scheme (VTSS) southward of the Izu Peninsula, approximately 9nm from the nearest land and approximately 56nm from her homeport of Yokosuka, Japan. Seven FTZ Sailors died as a result of the collision. Three other FTZ Sailors, including the Commanding Officer (CO), required airlift to U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka due to the serious nature of their injuries.

Aside from combat or terrorist attack, this collision represents the largest loss of life for the U.S. Navy from a maritime incident since the BELKNAP/KENNEDY collision of 22 November 1975. It is the Navy's third significant maritime accident over the first six months of 2017, all of which occurred in the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet (C7F) Area of Responsibility (AOR). On 31 January 2017, USS ANTIETAM (CG 54) grounded in Tokyo Bay. On 9 May 2017, USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57)<sup>1</sup> collided with a South Korean fishing vessel in the Sea of Japan.

<sup>1</sup> LAKE CHAMPLAIN is a U.S. THIRD Fleet ship and was on a routine deployment to the C7F AOR when she collided with a South Korean fishing vessel.

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Furthermore, it is the Surface Force's second major collision with a deep-draft merchant vessel within the last five years. On 12 August 2012, USS PORTER (DDG 78) collided with the supertanker OTOWASAN in the Arabian Gulf. The similarities between the FTZ/CRYSTAL collision and the PORTER/OTOWASAN collision are concerning, particularly the geometry of the collision, maneuvering decisions made by the Bridge watchstanders, and poor Bridge Resource Management. Multiple failings on the part of FTZ personnel will be demonstrated, necessitating appropriate accountability and changes in Surface Force training and readiness.

At the time of the collision, FTZ was below Fit, Fill, and Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) manning requirements, delinquent in both Tier 1 Mobility and Tier 2 Unit Tactical Warfare mission area certifications, and in need of a maintenance availability. Moreover, she was overconfident in her abilities given her operational tempo (OPTEMPO) as a Forward Deployed Naval Force (FDFNF) Japan asset, but without having completed many of the aforementioned Surface Force Readiness Manual (SFRM) training and maintenance requirements. Following a seven-month Drydock Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA), FTZ got underway for contractor sea trials on 24-27 January 2017. FTZ sailed again on 17 February 2017 for what was planned as a few weeks at sea for training and participation in a multi-sail event. She did not return to port until four months later, on 6 June 2017, and only then due to a significant casualty to #3 Switchboard following a fire caused by crew error during engineering training. While on patrol for four months, FTZ was certified in only seven of 12 Tier 1 Mobility Mission areas (3M, Anti-Terrorism, Explosive Safety, Medical, Damage Control, Navigation, and Search and Rescue). FTZ was certified in zero of 10 Tier 2 Unit Tactical Warfare areas. After only 10 days back in her homeport, FTZ sailed again on 16 June 2017, without the benefit of a post-patrol maintenance availability, and then collided in the early morning hours of 17 June 2017.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

On 16 June 2017, FTZ departed her homeport of Yokosuka, Japan to conduct operations in the C7F AOR. Liberty expired at 0600 for all hands, followed by a full schedule of demanding evolutions that left the 2200-0200 watch section fatigued and without adequate rest. At approximately 2300, FTZ began an outbound transit to sea from the Sagami Wan<sup>2</sup> operating area. Shortly after 2300, both the CO and Executive Officer (XO) had departed the bridge for the night.

The CO approved the outbound navigation track to sea in FTZ's Voyage Management System (VMS). Visibility was unrestricted, seas were one to three feet, and the winds were from 030T at 27 knots. Moonrise occurred at 2330 with 69% illumination. All FTZ watchstanders on the Bridge and in the Combat Information Center (CIC) were qualified for their assignments on the

<sup>2</sup> Sagami Wan refers to Sagami Bay, where U.S. Navy ships routinely conduct training.

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**2200-0200 watch.** The FTZ Chief Quartermaster (QMC) billet has been gapped since March of 2015, the ship does not man port and starboard lookouts, and had the following safety of navigation equipment out of commission (OOC) at the time of the collision: the bridge OJ-663 console (i.e., the Bright Bridge console), the SPA-25G radar repeater in CIC, and the SPS-67 Radar Set Control in CIC. The sole AIS laptop with a geographic display was in CIC rather than on the Bridge. All navigation lights were energized.

From 2345 to 0130, the Officer of the Deck (OOD) navigated through moderately dense traffic between Oshima Island and the Izu Peninsula at 20 knots, in accordance with the CO's Night Orders, to get ahead of the Plan of Intended Movement (PIM) in preparation for propulsion-limiting Engineering evolutions and drills the following morning. The Night Orders additionally gave the OOD the leeway to deviate from the navigation track by up to 1000 yards, double the allowance previously authorized by the CO, to avoid traffic without calling him.

During the 2200-0200 watch, Bridge and CIC watchstanders shared no surface contact information and conducted no maneuvering board solutions for any contacts. Until 0100, surface traffic in the vicinity of FTZ primarily consisted of fishing vessels and merchant ships, inbound or outbound Tokyo Bay on parallel or nearly reciprocal courses with little to no risk of collision. At approximately 0034 the OOD called the CO to make a routine contact report about four surface contacts which would have a closest point of approach (CPA) to FTZ on her port side at less than 6000 yards. The OOD made no other calls during her watch, although over the next hour, FTZ would pass at least five other contacts with CPAs meeting the CO's Standing Orders criteria for a contact report to him. One of these unreported contacts passed down FTZ's starboard side at approximately 650 yards at 0108.

At 0100, the surface picture began to grow more complex as FTZ sailed past Oshima Island toward the Mikomoto Shima VTSS. FTZ's approved navigation track did not account for, nor follow, this VTSS, although the recognition and use of Japanese VTSSs is noted in National Geospatial Intelligence Agency Publications 120 and 158 (Sailing Directions). Although users can manually plot VTSSs in VMS, FTZ's Navigation Team did not do so, nor did CIC watchstanders plot the VTSSs in the Aegis Display System (ADS) in CIC. This part of the track presented FTZ with a sequence of crossing situations in which she would have been the give-way vessel. Bridge and CIC watchstanders were unaware of this approaching and dynamic change in the surface traffic pattern, and sailed headlong into this crossing traffic at 20 knots.

From approximately 0100 to 0120, FTZ should have been able to see the port aspect of three vessels broad on her starboard bow. Each was traveling eastward in the vicinity of the VTSS, and each had an average closure rate with FTZ in excess of 30 knots. From nearest to furthest, these vessels and their speeds were WAN HAI 266 (17 knots), CRYSTAL (18 knots), and MAERSK EVORA (24 knots). CRYSTAL was overtaking WAN HAI 266, and MAERSK EVORA was overtaking CRYSTAL. Lateral separation between WAN HAI 266 and

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CRYSTAL was approximately 3000 yards, and lateral separation between CRYSTAL and MAERSK EVORA was approximately 8000 yards. During this 20 minute period, there would have been moments of visual overlap of these three vessels from the FTZ OOD's perspective. The OOD recalled holding a SPS-73 track on two of these three vessels, however, reconstruction from FTZ's VMS validated that the OOD actually held track on all three (although no more than two at the same time) at different intervals.

The OOD attempted to track and acquire an Automated Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA) solution for the vessel nearest to FTZ (most likely WAN HAI 266). The OOD did not use the Bridge AIS receiver to aid in her situational awareness. After obtaining a CPA of 1500 yards on the starboard beam for this contact, she lost this track in the clutter of her improperly adjusted SPS-73 radar. The Junior Officer of the Deck (JOOD) and Conning Officer (CONN) were on the *port* bridge wing for much of this time period, looking at contacts which had either passed and were opening or which had left bearing drift, and therefore posed no risk of collision.

At approximately 0120, FTZ was on track to cross the bow of WAN HAI 266 at 1500 yards. MAERSK EVORA remained broad on the starboard bow at a range of approximately 20000 yards with no appreciable bearing change, and for the moment, no one was tracking CRYSTAL either visually or by radar. Shortly thereafter, the JOOD went to the starboard bridge wing and visually observed CRYSTAL and a port side light at close range. Over the next several minutes, the OOD and JOOD discussed CRYSTAL and what action should be taken. Initially, the OOD intended to take no action, believing CRYSTAL to be the vessel for which she had calculated the 1500 yard CPA. During this time, the OOD and JOOD made at least three trips to the starboard bridge wing to visually observe CRYSTAL, eventually realizing that CRYSTAL was not the vessel for which the OOD had calculated the 1500 yard CPA.

All the while, the OOD took no action to avoid collision, did not call the CO, did not sound at least five short blasts, and made no attempt to hail CRYSTAL via bridge-to-bridge radio. Concurrently, CIC had no radar track on either WAN HAI 266 or CRYSTAL, and like the Bridge, was making no effective use of AIS. With the AIS laptop at the Surface Warfare Coordinator (SUWC) console, CIC should have been able to clearly identify both vessels, both of which were transmitting AIS at the time.

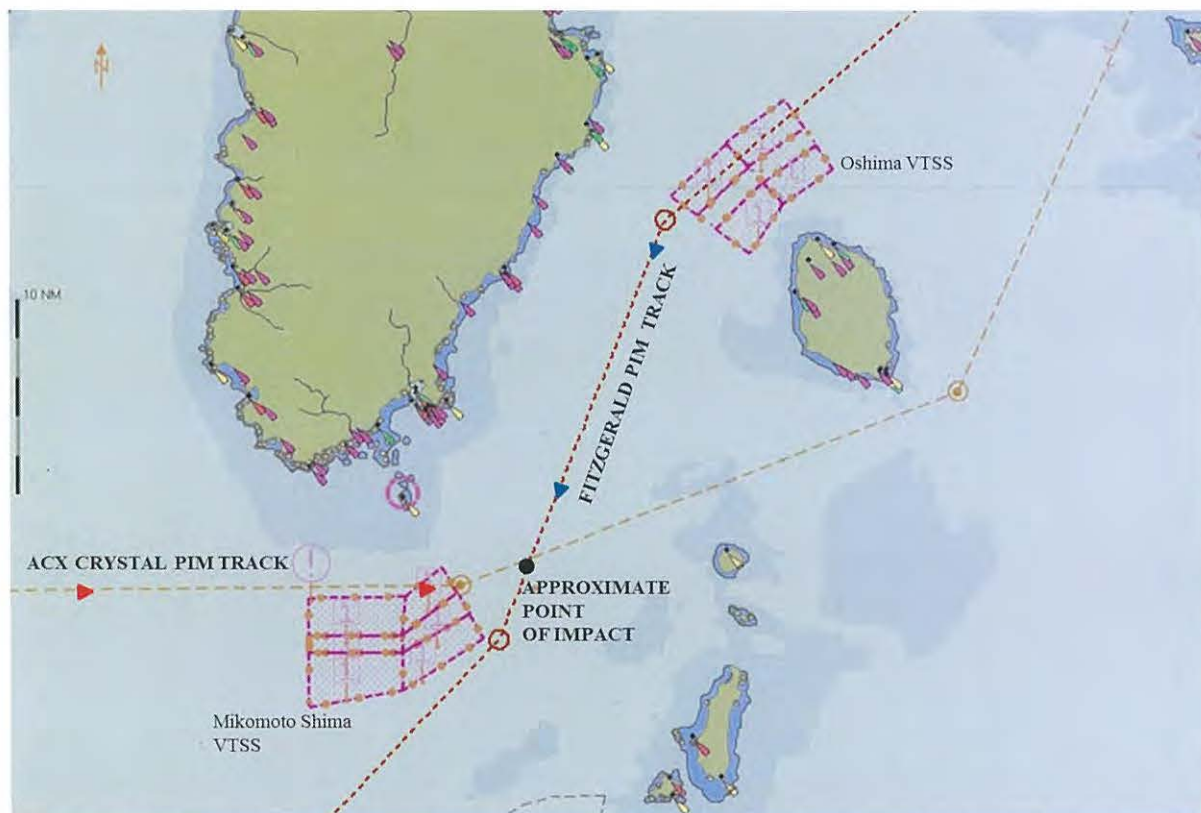
Finally recognizing that action was necessary, the OOD went to the port bridge wing to get the CONN to have him alter course to starboard. However, upon returning with him to the Bridge, she evaluated that she did not have the sea room to make a turn to starboard without colliding. No consideration was given to using an emergency backing bell. Instead, she decided to turn to port. She ordered the CONN to come to full, and then flank, speed ahead, and then ordered full, and then hard, left rudder. These actions were delayed as the CONN "froze" in the panic of the moment, and the OOD effectively (though not formally stating it) assumed the CONN and began yelling orders to the Helm. The Under Instruction (U/I) Helm watchstander similarly "froze"

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when both the OOD and CONN began shouting orders. Eventually the Boatswain Mate of the Watch put the rudder over hard left and pushed the throttles forward. These actions occurred just 30 seconds prior to impact. FTZ had briefly started coming left and speed had increased by only two knots (to 22 knots) by the time of impact.



The figure is a VMS reconstruction of the FTZ Plan of Intended Movement (PIM) track from Sagami Wan to sea and the CRYSTAL inbound voyage plan from sea to Tokyo with the Oshima and Mikomoto Shima Voluntary Traffic Separation Schemes overlaid. (ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT AND PRIVILEGED)

In accordance with the International Rules of the Road, FTZ and CRYSTAL were in a crossing situation once in sight of one another. FTZ was the give-way vessel, and CRYSTAL was the stand-on vessel.

In the 30 minutes leading up to the collision, neither FTZ nor CRYSTAL took any action to avoid collision until less than one minute prior to impact. FTZ maintained a constant course of 190 at 20 knots. CRYSTAL made one course change at 0119, turning port from course 088 to course 069 (in accordance with her voyage plan), at a constant speed of 18 knots.

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Like FTZ, CRYSTAL Bridge watchstanders (the Second Officer and an Able Bodied Seaman) did not contact the Master prior to the collision, did not sound at least five short blasts, and made no attempt to hail FTZ via bridge-to-bridge radio. CRYSTAL's navigation lights were illuminated, and CRYSTAL was in autopilot until just prior to impact. Prior to the collision, CRYSTAL watchstanders came out of autopilot and initiated a turn to starboard, too late to have adequate effect. Audio recordings from CRYSTAL's Bridge reveal what is most likely the sound of a signal light being used to get FTZ's attention just minutes before the collision. FTZ watchstanders did not recall seeing this signal light.

FTZ sustained damage above and below the waterline, including the main deck, 01, and 02 levels. Officer staterooms, including the CO's cabin, and SPY Radar Array rooms were severely damaged in the collision. FTZ also suffered major flooding in Berthing Compartments 1 and 2 (Berthing 1 and 2), and in the Number 1 Auxiliary Machinery Room (AUX 1).

Following the collision, CRYSTAL continued turning to starboard in the direction of the MAERSK EVORA's track, resulting in an AIS collision alarm on the CRYSTAL's Furuno Radar Display. CRYSTAL then took evasive action to avoid a second collision with MAERSK EVORA. This explains the dynamic maneuvering of CRYSTAL which was reported in many media outlets.

FTZ damage control efforts included containment of flooding, dewatering, and systems isolation. Power was lost to the forward part of the ship, including CIC, as a result of the collision itself, loss of #1 Switchboard due to flooding in AUX 1, and electrical isolation by FTZ Damage Control Teams. By comparison, CRYSTAL suffered relatively minor damage and had no fatalities or injuries.

Shortly after the collision, the FTZ Assistant Operations Officer (AOPS) made a call for assistance to Yokosuka Port Operations via an Iridium phone and an embarked Destroyer Squadron FIFTEEN (DESRON 15) Chief Petty Officer made notification to the DESRON 15 Staff Duty Officer via a personal cell phone. More than an hour after the incident, CRYSTAL returned to the vicinity of the collision, communicated with FTZ about the need to render assistance, and then ultimately departed the scene another hour later after getting concurrence from the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) to proceed into Tokyo Bay.

Two JCG ships and four JCG helicopters supported rescue and assistance efforts, specifically the air lift of three FTZ Sailors, including the CO,<sup>3</sup> and flew additional DESRON 15 personnel, including the Deputy Commodore, to FTZ to provide supervision and support. USS DEWEY

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<sup>3</sup> A fourth person (ENS Joseph White) was also on the medical evacuation flight as an escort for the CO.

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(DDG 105) got underway from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) on the morning of 17 June 2017 to provide assistance and escort.

At 1856 on 17 June 2017, FTZ returned to CFAY and moored at Berth 12. Damage control efforts continued into the night. Diving and initial assessments ensued shortly after arrival. Seven FTZ Sailors remained in a missing status, and so search and rescue operations in and around Sagami Wan continued. A second diving operation on the morning of 18 June 2017 recovered the unaccounted for seven Sailors from Berthing 2, bringing an end to search and rescue operations.

**FINDINGS OF FACT****A. Background**

*This section provides FTZ and CRYSTAL ship characteristics and FTZ leadership biographical information. It also provides CRYSTAL's radar and navigational capabilities, and identifies CRYSTAL Bridge watchstanders on watch at the time of collision. FTZ equipment capabilities and watchstanders are addressed in detail in follow-on sections.*

**USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62)**

1. USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) (FTZ) is an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer. FTZ was launched in January 1994, and commissioned in October 1995. FTZ is 505 feet long, and displaces 8300 tons (full load). FTZ has two Certificates of Alternate Compliance, meaning that while her navigation light configuration does not conform to Annex I of reference (b), she satisfies Rule 1(e) of this reference. [Enclosures (8) and (9)]
2. FTZ's CO at the time of the collision was Commander Bryce Benson, USN. CDR Benson has been on active duty for 18 years. He assumed command on 12 May 2017. Prior to assuming command, CDR Benson served as the FTZ XO from 25 November 2015 to 11 March 2017 (approximately 16 months). His previous sea tours include USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81), USS KAUFFMAN (FFG 59) and USS FORREST SHERMAN (DDG 98). In 2007, CDR Benson screened for the early command program and subsequently served as XO, then CO, of USS GUARDIAN (MCM 5), forward deployed from Sasebo Japan, 2008-2010. [Enclosure (10)]
3. On 11 July 2017, the DESRON 15 Commodore temporarily relieved CDR Benson as CO due to medical incapacity. [Enclosures (11) and (12)]
4. FTZ's former CO was CDR Robert Shu, USN. CDR Shu has been on active duty for 19 years. He assumed command on 15 December 2015. Prior to assuming command, CDR Shu

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17. On the night of 10-11 May 2017, FTZ experienced a near-collision with a merchant vessel during her approach to Sasebo. At night, the OOD became confused by the surface contact picture and called the CO (CDR Shu) to the Bridge for assistance. The CO arrived on the Bridge and after determining a course of action to maneuver astern of the primary contact of interest, departed the Bridge. Over the next 16 minutes, the OOD navigated FTZ astern of the contact of interest. Upon clearing the stern, the OOD became immediately aware that another vessel was on the opposite side of the primary contact. The OOD sounded five short blasts and ordered all back full emergency to avoid collision. [Enclosures (24) - (28)]

18. On 6 June 2017, FTZ returned to Yokosuka for emergent repairs to #3 Switchboard. #3 Switchboard had suffered a fire due to operator error (the Electric Plant Control Console (EPCC) operator paralleled the 1S and 3S generators out of phase with each other during drills, causing the fire and resulting in a temporary loss of all power throughout the ship). Originally scheduled for a two day underway in late June in support of unit level training and a Midshipmen cruise, FTZ's schedule changed again in order to support C7F operations. [Enclosures (21) and (29)]

**C. 16 June 2017 – FTZ Bridge Perspective**

*This section highlights FTZ's schedule of events on 16 June 2017 from liberty expiration to midnight. Of note, a detailed review of all available paper, audio, and electronic logs noted errors and omissions in the FTZ Deck and CIC logs. Thus, times listed are approximate, having been extrapolated from numerous sources, including crew interviews. Notes related to applicable COLREGS Rules, FTZ CO's Standing Orders, and watchstander qualifications and experience are inserted where appropriate to add context.*

19. On the morning of 16 June 2017 FTZ was moored at Pier 12, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY). At 0535, the XO arrived onboard. At 0600, liberty expired for all hands. At 0656, the CO arrived. [Enclosures (30) and (31)]

20. At 0900, FTZ held a navigation brief on the mess decks in preparation for the underway and anchorage. The navigation brief was in accordance with reference (c) requirements and included briefing slides on weather and astronomical data, the evolution timeline and harbor movements, required communications, the status of navigation equipment, tides, currents, track information, ground tackle status, engineering plant status, force protection, the intended anchorage location for ammunition onload, and operational risk management. [Enclosure (32)]

21. At 1030, FTZ stationed the Sea and Anchor Detail. FTZ was underway from Pier 12 at 1130 and anchored at A-12 anchorage at 1210 in preparation for ammunition onload. [Enclosure (30)]

22. The A-12 anchorage is located approximately 4000 yards northwest of CFAY in Tokyo Bay at 35-18.8N, 139-40.9E. [Enclosure (30)]

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38. At 2145, OS1 Rainford Graham relieved the watch as CIC Watch Supervisor (CICWS), and at 2147, LT Natalie Combs relieved the watch as Tactical Action Officer (TAO). [Enclosures (37), (53), and (56)]

a. OS1 Graham qualified CICWS on 13 January 2010 onboard USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40) and requalified onboard FTZ on 24 January 2017. OS1 Graham stood watch as the Piloting Officer for both Sea and Anchor details. OS1 took a nap (duration unknown) at 1800 prior to relieving the watch. [Enclosures (55) and (56)]

b. LT Combs qualified as TAO on 21 March 2013 as a Second Tour Division Officer onboard USS MCCAMPBELL (DDG 85) and requalified onboard FTZ on 28 February 2017. At the time of the collision, LT Combs had not requalified OOD on FTZ. LT Combs was the TAO for both Sea and Anchor details. Because LT Combs invoked her Article 31(b) rights, no additional information regarding rest prior to relieving the watch is known. [Enclosures (57) and (58)]

39. At 2153, LTJG Sarah Coppock relieved the watch as Officer of the Deck. [Enclosure (30)]

a. LTJG Coppock qualified as OOD on 22 March 2015 onboard USS ASHLAND (LSD 48) and requalified OOD onboard FTZ on 1 February 2017. LTJG Coppock had made this transit once prior during daylight hours. LTJG Coppock stood watch as SUWC (U/I) during both Sea and Anchor details and was a Safety Officer for the ammunition onload. LTJG Coppock rested, but did not sleep, approximately one hour prior to relieving the watch as OOD. Prior to relieving the watch, the OOD only toured CCS and CIC, not CSMC. LTJG Coppock had stood watch with the JOOD for approximately one week prior to this underway period. LTJG Coppock stated she was fatigued prior to assuming the watch as OOD. [Enclosures (52), (59), and (60)]

40. By 2200, all Bridge and CIC watchstanders had turned over with the exception of the Boatswain Mate of the Watch (BMOW) and the 2200-0200 Deck Seamen. The prevailing weather conditions held seas at one to three feet, wind from 030 at 27 knots with unrestricted visibility. Moonrise occurred at 2330 with 69% illumination. FTZ was 2000 yards from land, conducting small boat operations to return ATG WESTPAC personnel ashore. [Enclosures (32) and (61)]

Note: The times for FTZ's small boat launch, recovery, and securing were not recorded in the Deck Log. By all accounts, small boat operations concluded at approximately 2300, shortly followed by securing the Modified Navigation Detail. [Enclosures (26), (41), (43), (56), and (60)]

41. At 2300, the CO left the Bridge. Prior to departing the Bridge, he approved the transit track from Sagami Wan to sea and told the OOD that the track separation leeway (without having to

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53. As FTZ proceeded south-southwest in Sagami Wan from WP #1 to WP #2, the OOD observed what she perceived to be normal clutter on the SPS-73 out to about 4000 to 6000 yards from the center of the scope. The OOD adjusted the Fast Time Constant (FTC) and Sensitivity Time Constant (STC) controls to attempt to improve the radar picture. The OOD did not make use of the SPS-67 using the SPA-25G during her watch. [Enclosure (71)]

54. At 0015, FTZ held two contacts on VMS, both of which FTZ was overtaking, and one of which was within 6000 yards. [Enclosure (71)]

a. The OOD did not make a contact report to the CO. [Enclosure (60)]

b. The Bridge watchstanders did not generate any maneuvering board solutions. [Enclosures (43), (56), and (60)]

c. The OOD did not share any information regarding these contacts with CIC. [Enclosure (60)]

d. The OOD did not communicate her maneuvering intentions to CIC. [Enclosure (60)]

e. CIC held no track on these contacts and therefore did not generate a maneuvering board solution. [Enclosures (47) and (57)]

55. At 0022, FTZ maneuvered port to course 220, speed 20 knots. This course change was absent from the Deck Log. [Enclosures (30), (33), and (69)]

56. At 0033, FTZ maneuvered to course 215. This course change was absent from the Deck Log. [Enclosures (30), (33), and (69)]

57. At 0034, the OOD made a contact report to the CO. The report involved a group of four vessels passing FTZ on the port side, the closest of which had a CPA of 1500 yards on the port bow. The OOD stated her intent was for FTZ to maintain course and speed and the CO agreed. [Enclosures (60) and (63)]

a. The Bridge watchstanders did not generate any maneuvering board solutions. [Enclosures (43), (56), and (60)]

b. The OOD did not share any information regarding these four contacts with CIC. [Enclosure (60)]

c. The OOD did not inform CIC that she had called the CO to make a contact report. [Enclosure (60)]

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d. CIC had no track on these four contacts and therefore did not generate a maneuvering board solution. [Enclosures (47) and (57)]

e. This was the only contact report the OOD made to the CO during her watch. [Enclosure (60)]

58. At 0054, FTZ maneuvered port to course 190, speed 20 knots. This course change was absent from the Deck Log. [Enclosures (30) and (69)]

59. At 0058, the OOD held five contacts on VMS. Three of those contacts would pass within 6000 yards of FTZ down the port side (all three were contacts inbound to Tokyo Bay similar to the previous four contacts for which she had called the CO at 0034). [Enclosure (63)]

a. The OOD did not make a contact report to the CO. [Enclosure (60)]

b. The Bridge watchstanders did not generate any maneuvering board solutions. [Enclosures (43), (56), and (60)]

c. The OOD did not share any information regarding these contacts with CIC. [Enclosure (60)]

d. The OOD did not communicate her maneuvering intentions to CIC. [Enclosure (60)]

e. CIC held no track on these contacts and therefore did not generate a maneuvering board solution. [Enclosures (47) and (57)]

60. At 0100, FTZ was on course 190, speed 20 knots. Seas remained one to three feet, wind from 030T at 27 knots with unrestricted visibility. It was 1.5 hours past moonrise, the moon was 17 degrees above the horizon, and illumination remained at 69%. CRYSTAL bore 223T from FTZ at a distance of 32000 yards. FTZ was just starting to present as an intermittent radar return on CRYSTAL's Furuno radar. [Enclosures (32), (61), (63), and (72)]

61. From approximately 0100 to 0120, the JOOD and CONN were on the port bridge wing observing contacts to port. [Enclosures (43) and (56)]

62. From approximately 0100 to 0120 FTZ should have been able to visually see the port aspect of three vessels broad on her starboard bow. Each was traveling eastward in the vicinity of the Mikomoto Shima VTSS, and each had an average closure rate with FTZ in excess of 30 knots. From nearest to furthest, these vessels were: [Enclosures (16) and (63)]

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violations by OI Division Sailors, including the Chief Petty Officer and Leading Petty Officer. [Enclosure (222)]

407. A number of crew reported to interviews in relaxed civilian attire (and had uniforms available), without proper grooming, and were unable to show basic military courtesies. The Senior Officer conducting the interview had to twice interrupt interviews to correct the poor military bearing of two Junior Officers, one of whom was a DH. When the CMC was questioned about FTZ standards, and was asked about the out of Navy regulation mustache of a specific Junior Officer, he admitted that others had spoken to him about the Officer's grooming standards, but admitted that no action had been taken. At the prompting of the Senior Investigating Officer, the Junior Officer shaved his mustache. [Enclosure (205)]

**Retention/Advancement**

408. A review of FTZ's command advancement percentages and retention rates (and other Command Career Counselor data) compared to Navy fleet-wide averages revealed no statistically relevant information. FTZ Command Career Counselor programs were assessed as compliant by DESRON 15 in June of 2017.

**OPINIONS**

1. The collision between FTZ and CRYSTAL was avoidable. There are four root causes which led to the collision:

- a. The FTZ OOD demonstrated poor seamanship contrary to the International Rules of the Road.
- b. The FTZ Bridge and CIC Watchteams, jointly and individually, failed at the basic principles of Bridge Resource Management (BRM).
- c. The FTZ CO abdicated his responsibility for safe navigation during the outbound transit from Sagami Wan to the OOD.
- d. CRYSTAL's Second Officer demonstrated poor seamanship contrary to the International Rules of the Road.

**A. Root Causes of the Collision**

2. The FTZ OOD, LTJG Coppock, demonstrated poor seamanship contrary to the International Rules of the Road. She hazarded her vessel and the lives of the men and women under her charge as OOD. Her deficiencies as OOD resulted in the death of seven FTZ Sailors.

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a. With respect to the Rules of the Road:

(1) She failed to ensure FTZ maintained a proper lookout so as to make a full appraisal of the risk of collision with CRYSTAL (Rule 5).

(2) She failed to ensure FTZ proceeded at a safe speed taking into account, among other things, the prevailing traffic density and the uncorrected existence of far-reaching clutter on her radar screen (Rule 6).

(3) She failed to determine if a risk of collision existed with CRYSTAL by using all available means, including the SPS-67, visual monitoring for bearing drift, a maneuvering board, or help from CIC (Rule 7).

(4) She failed to deem that risk of collision existed once faced with doubt as to that risk, which doubt she should have had following her inability to acquire CRYSTAL by radar (Rule 7).

(5) She failed to make proper use of the fitted radar by not ensuring that the SPS-67 and SPS-73 were properly tuned and adjusted (Rule 7).

(6) Once faced with difficulty in acquiring CRYSTAL with the SPS-73, she failed to make "equivalent systematic observation of detected objects" (Rule 7).

(7) She failed to appreciate, by radar or visual observation, that CRYSTAL was on a constant bearing with a decreasing range, which observation would have led her to deem risk of collision to exist (Rule 7).

(8) With ample time available to take positive action to avoid collision, she failed to take any such action (Rule 8).

(9) She failed to keep out of the way of the vessel on FTZ's own starboard side, and failed to avoid crossing ahead of the WAN HAI 266, in her attempt to cross ahead of CRYSTAL (Rule 15).

(10) Finally, the action taken to avoid collision was not early and substantial, and did not keep FTZ well clear of CRYSTAL (Rule 16). [FF 60-85, 95-100]

b. Furthermore, the OOD failed to call the CO to the bridge, failed to communicate with and enlist the support of her watchteam (including CIC watchstanders), failed to use all available sensors to clarify the surface contact picture (including AIS), and made no attempt to contact CRYSTAL (or any other vessels), or use the navigable water readily available to avoid collision.

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Even given the additional leeway allowed by the 16 June 2017 Night Orders to navigate up to 1000 yards left or right of track without calling the CO, she failed to call the CO when she opened in excess of 1000 yards from track. On her first time to ever make this particular transit at night as OOD, she ultimately drove headlong into crossing maritime traffic in the vicinity of the Mikomoto Shima VTSS, averaging more than 30 knots of closure to multiple surface contacts for which FTZ would be the give-way vessel. [FF 60-85, 95-100]

3. The FTZ Bridge and CIC Watchteams, jointly and individually, failed at the basic principles of Bridge Resource Management (BRM).

a. The FTZ OOD and her watchteam failed at BRM. Specifically:

(1) Communication. The OOD failed to communicate with anyone – the CO, her Bridge watchteam, CIC, or any of the merchant vessels whose bows she crossed (or intended to cross) or who had close-aboard CPAs.

(2) Teamwork. The OOD failed to use her other watchstanders as a team. She dismissed the other members of the Bridge watchteam, distrusted the SUWC's watchstanding abilities and recommendations, and failed to seek the support of any other Bridge watchstanders as additional lookouts to help with contact management.

(3) Decision making. Failing to communicate with anyone else and failing to use her watchstanders as a team, the OOD resigned herself to being the sole decision-maker on her watch. In the final moments prior to collision, when there was still time to take effective action, she was indecisive about her contemplated turn to starboard to avoid collision. With no effective backup, she failed to take any avoiding action until just prior to impact.

(4) Situational awareness. The entire Bridge team failed to comprehend that the prevailing merchant traffic flow would change dramatically as FTZ approached the eastern boundary of the Mikomoto Shima VTSS, and failed to use the tools available to understand their environment. The OOD relied exclusively on the SPS-73 radar to manage her surface contact picture from the Bridge. The JOOD and CONN spent an excessive period of time on the port bridge wing observing passed and opening traffic. No Bridge watchstanders made effective use of either AIS information or the SPS-67 radar return on the SPA-25G radar repeater during their entire watch. In the critical 10 minutes prior to collision, this complete lack of situational awareness by the entire Bridge watchteam led to shock, confusion, indecision, and ultimately panic as they suddenly became aware of CRYSTAL bearing down on them at more than 18 knots at extremely close range.

(5) Fatigue. The OOD and the majority of her watchteam were excessively fatigued.

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The majority of both Bridge and CIC watchstanders had little to no rest of any rejuvenating value prior to standing their 2200-0200 watches. [FF 33, 36, 39, 49-85, 95-100]

(6) The executive summary of the Surface Safety Instruction succinctly summarizes the BRM failures of the OOD leading to the collision:

“It is difficult for any one individual to identify, evaluate and mitigate all the risks in complex or brand new situations. This leaves us vulnerable to accidents and major events resulting from a combination of seemingly minor individual errors.”

- CNSP/CNSLINST 5100.1A dtd 26Mar15

b. The JOOD, LT Parker, a qualified and experienced OOD from a previous ship, was derelict in the performance of her duties by failing to provide any forceful backup to the OOD. A full 10 minutes prior to the collision, when she asked the OOD if she was tracking the vessel on FTZ's starboard side, and the OOD responded in the affirmative stating that it had a 1500 yard CPA abeam of FTZ, her only forceful back up was to respond, “I don't think so.” This was hardly the kind of forceful backup expected of an experienced watchstander. [FF 36, 50, 52, 54, 57, 59, 61, 64, 73, 75, 77]

c. While ENS Womack's experience was limited, and he was standing his first watch as a qualified FTZ CONN, he nevertheless failed to provide any forceful backup to the OOD. Further, his competence as a lookout to evaluate contacts at night is poor. [FF 37, 50, 52, 54, 57, 59, 61, 64, 77, 82]

d. The Tactical Action Officer (TAO), LT Combs, and her watchteam failed as completely as the OOD and her watchteam. As a TAO, the FTZ Operations Officer, and the most senior person on watch during the collision, her performance was significantly below standards. She was derelict in the performance of her duties by failing in her duty as a primary advisor, supervisor, and mentor to the OOD. Given that FTZ was too close to land to radiate the SPY-1D radar, the TAO was free to dedicate her complete focus and attention on supporting the Bridge watchteam as it negotiated a night time transit out of Sagami Wan in moderately dense traffic. Based on her complete lack of situational awareness, her complete lack of interaction with the OOD and her watchteam, and the volume of paperwork discovered in the vicinity of the TAO seat following the collision, she was most likely consumed and distracted by a review of Operations Department paperwork for the three and a half hours of her watch prior to collision vice standing a professional, vigilant watch. [FF 39, 50-52, 54, 57, 59, 62, 64, 77, 86-89, 92, 343-345]

e. The Surface Warfare Coordinator (SUWC), LT Woodley, and Surface Watch Supervisor (SWS), OS2 Stawecki, were derelict in the performance of their duties in leading the Surface Watch Team in that they failed to maintain an accurate surface contact picture. The SUWC

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demonstrated no situational awareness for the expected navigation track, was unaware of the existence of VTSSs, had no navigational understanding of the expected flow of traffic, and made no effective use of AIS to support his situational awareness. Both the SUWC and SWS simply accepted the challenges that the clutter on the SPS-67 radar return presented them and accepted that manual tracking was the norm because of a concern that using the auto-tracking feature would crash the system. Fundamentally, the Surface Watch Team allowed FTZ to effectively navigate in the blind from CIC, and CIC leadership passively accepted that "it was a quiet night." [FF 33, 36, 50-52, 54, 57, 59, 62, 64, 77, 86-89, 91-94, 343, 346, 347]

f. The Combat Information Center Watch Officer (CICWO), LTJG Moncravie, and the Combat Information Center Watch Supervisor (CICWS), OS1 Graham, were derelict in the performance of their duties to properly supervise subordinate watchstations in CIC, specifically the Surface Watch Team. The CICWO and CICWS contributed nothing to the safe navigation of FTZ other than recording the ship's position every 15 minutes. Further, the CICWO and CICWS failed to forcefully back up the TAO or Surface Watch Team or demonstrate a questioning attitude with respect to the number and close range of SPS-73 contacts being tracked by the OOD on the Bridge (and being displayed on VMS in CIC) compared to contacts being tracked by the CIC Surface Watch Team. [FF 36, 38, 50-52, 54, 57, 59, 62, 64, 77, 86, 87, 89, 90, 343, 348-350]

g. The Combat Systems Coordinator (CSC), FCAC Johnson, was derelict in the performance of his duties in that he provided zero forceful backup to the TAO or Surface Watch Team by failing to monitor, or even consider monitoring, the SPS-67 radar return on his console. [FF 36, 50, 52, 54, 57, 59, 60, 64, 77, 343, 352, 357]

4. The FTZ CO was derelict in the performance of his duties and hazarded his vessel and the lives of the men and women entrusted to his care by abdicating his responsibility for safe navigation to the OOD. It is inexplicable that neither he, nor his XO, were on the Bridge for his first outbound Yokosuka transit as CO, at night, in close proximity to land, and expecting moderately dense fishing and merchant traffic. He should have been aware of the experience level of his Bridge watchteam, and that his watchstanders were at least as fatigued as he was from a long day of operations without sufficient rest. He not only failed to put mitigations in place to account for the prevailing circumstances and conditions, but doubled the leeway given to the OOD to maneuver left or right of track to avoid traffic. His decision to order 20 knots created a false sense of urgency, and was not in accordance with Rule 6 (Safe Speed) of the International Rules of the Road by failing to account for dynamic changes in the prevailing circumstances and conditions for safe speed as the ship approached the eastern end of the Mikomoto Shima VTSS. [FF 41, 44]

5. CRYSTAL's Second Officer demonstrated poor seamanship contrary to the International Rules of the Road. With respect to the Rules of the Road:

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- a. He failed to maintain a proper lookout so as to make a full appraisal of the risk of collision with FTZ (Rule 5).
- b. He failed to determine if a risk of collision with FTZ existed by using all available means (Rule 7).
- c. He failed to appreciate, by radar or visual observation, that FTZ was on a constant bearing with a decreasing range, which observation would have led him to deem risk of collision to exist (Rule 7).
- d. With ample time available to take positive action to avoid collision, he failed to take any such action (Rule 8).
- e. He failed to maintain course and speed by turning to port (in accordance with CRYSTAL's voyage plan) despite the risk of collision (Rule 17).
- f. He failed to take action to avoid collision once it became apparent that action by FTZ alone would not avoid the collision (Rule 17).
- g. He failed to give at least five short and rapid blasts on CRYSTAL's whistle once in doubt as to whether FTZ was taking action to avoid collision (Rule 34).
- h. In addition, the Second Officer failed to follow CRYSTAL's Standing Orders by failing to call the Master when FTZ's CPA was within one nautical mile and failing to take frequent and accurate compass bearings of FTZ to detect the risk of collision. [FF 63, 65, 68, 70-72, 77, 80, 84, 85, 96, 100, 103-105]

**B. Contributing Causes of the Collision**

6. Lack of forceful backup from the XO. The XO was derelict in the performance of his duties by failing to provide forceful backup to the CO. He failed to properly account for the impact of setting a 0600 liberty expiration time in advance of a known schedule that fatigued a significant number of his watchstanders, particularly his 2200-0200 Bridge and CIC watchstanders. Like the CO, he departed the Bridge on completion of small boat operations after 2300, and there is no evidence he provided contrary counsel to the CO on the experience of the Bridge watchteam, safe speed for the outboard transit or navigating with caution in the vicinity of any VTSSs. Ultimately, he failed to follow his own 16 June 2017 Night Orders advice: "Watch each other and make sure everyone is focused...get back into the mindset where you are watching all contacts closely..." [FF 19-26, 41-44]

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7. Poorly Designed Navigation Track. The Navigator and the Assistant Navigator (QM1 Clark) were derelict in the performance of their duties in that they planned an outbound navigation track to avoid setting the Modified Navigation Detail. The CO approved this track. While the track maximized distance from land, the Navigator failed to provide forceful backup to the CO and XO by not taking into consideration the expected traffic density and flow, purposefully designing a track which created multiple, challenging crossing situations at night by cutting across the eastern end of the Mikomoto Shima VTSS. [FF 43,44]

8. Fatigue. The FTZ command leadership triad allowed fatigue to be a contributing cause to the collision by not managing the Plan of Day and corresponding watchbills to allow their Sailors to be sufficiently rested for watch in accordance with the CO's Standing Orders. [FF 19-26]

9. CO/XO Bridge/CIC Mentorship. While there is no standard for how much time a CO and XO should spend on the bridge, it is the opinion of the Investigating Officer that the time spent by the CO (both CDRs Shu and Benson) and the XO (both CDRs Benson and Babbitt), particularly between taps and reveille, was not commensurate with their responsibilities for safe navigation. This is particularly evidenced by the demonstration of poor watchstanding principles and practices on 16-17 June. [FF 41, 326, 338-341, 366-372]

10. FTZ leadership (and by extension DESRON 15) was overconfident in the command's abilities. FTZ undoubtedly overachieved by her solid participation in the DESRON's 2017 multi-sail event so soon after sea trials. While on patrol for over three months following the multi-sail, FTZ operated without the normal ATG and ISIC checks and balances afforded to ships as part of routine Surface Force Readiness Manual training events following an extended availability. [FF 11-16, 18, 261-285]

11. Lack of QMC. While FTZ's manning (using the Fit/Fill/NEC methodology) does not meet FDNF requirements, this was not a cause of the collision. However, the gapped QMC billet is considered a contributing cause. Although qualified as Assistant Navigator, QM1 Clark's level of knowledge is poor, particularly with respect to VMS functionality. Additionally, and as noted in the command culture section which follows, the FTZ Deck Log for 16-17 June 2017 is inaccurate and below Navy standards. [FF 255-260]

12. Level of knowledge/PQS Program. Qualifications of Bridge and CIC watchstanders on watch at the time of the collision were found to be in place. While PQS Program deficiencies are not a contributing factor, the general level of knowledge demonstrated in the course of this investigation was poor, calling into question the effectiveness of the PQS process. Of particular concern, the level of knowledge of LTJG Moncravie, the on-watch CICWO, was inadequate. [FF 264-268 and 373-386]

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13. Training. The FTZ training program is not being planned, executed, or administered in accordance with CNSF policies by the XO. In particular, FTZ's failure to complete all Navigation, Seamanship, and Shiphandling training requirements is considered a contributing cause. [FF 281-290]

14. Rules of the Road Knowledge. As led by the CO and XO and managed by the Navigator, level of knowledge with respect to the International Rules of the Road onboard FTZ is particularly poor. Further, it is the opinion of the Investigating Officer that multiple choice tests do not sufficiently test comprehension of the Rules of the Road, nor do they establish a proper foundation for their application. Based on the experience of the Investigation Team (which included six qualified SWOs) and the findings of fact, this is assessed as a Fleet-wide issue. [FF 281-286, 373, 374]

15. Material Deficiencies/Complacency. The accumulation of material deficiencies in equipment used for safe navigation contributed to the collision. [FF 291, 299, 300]

a. First, the material deficiencies themselves contributed to a lack of situational awareness on the part the watchstanders, particularly the SUWC and SWS. [FF 311]

b. Second, because of the long standing and/or persistent nature of some of these deficiencies, they contributed to poor overall watchstander level of knowledge on some of the specific capabilities and advanced functionality of vital safety of navigation equipment. [FF 51 and 53]

c. Third, this combination of deficiencies contributed to a culture of complacency, of accepting problems, and a dismissal of the use of some of the most important, modern equipment used for safe navigation. Specific examples follow:

(1) Use of the AIS laptop with a geographic display. Because the AIS laptop is only used by the SUWC onboard FTZ, Bridge watchstanders appear to place no relative value on or understand the importance of the AIS geographic display. By its position relative to the SUWC console in CIC, behind the computer console used for chat by the SUWC and out of view unless the SUWC moves, AIS is clearly considered a secondary situational awareness tool. Additionally, because the AIS laptop was out of commission for the much of FTZ's four month patrol between February and June 2017, some FTZ SUWCs seem to have concluded it unnecessary to stand an effective watch. [FF 304, 375, 376]

(2) It is highly likely the SPS-67 had been in Long Pulse for the majority, if not all, of the entire year, due to the degraded Radar Set Control and the lack of a Temporary Standing Order (TSO) to account for it. This deficiency would account for the fact that so many CIC

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**From:** [Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO](#)  
**To:** [Bill Moran](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Intentions on FTZ Accountability  
**Date:** Friday, August 11, 2017 7:40:00  
**Sensitivity:** Personal

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-----Original Message-----

From: Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00  
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2017 10:05 PM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Davidson, Philip S ADM USFF, N00  
Cc: Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Rexrode, Timothy A CAPT OPNAV, N09; Carter, Matthew J RADM COMPACFLT, N01; Renshaw, Curt CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: Intentions on FTZ Accountability

VCNO,

Tracking all from here. Will make sure all understand the plan and are fully supporting.

ATB,

Notso

ADM Scott H. Swift  
Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet

-----Original Message-----

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2017 1:11 PM  
To: Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Davidson, Philip S ADM USFF, N00  
Cc: Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Rexrode, Timothy A CAPT OPNAV, N09; Carter, Matthew J RADM COMPACFLT, N01; Renshaw, Curt CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: Intentions on FTZ Accountability  
Importance: High

Notso,

Spoke with CNO....he's ready to move forward with Joey's intended accountability actions as laid out below, with the understanding that these actions are initial responses based on the investigation which is still underway and that further actions may be taken as the endorsement process is completed. CNO believes we should move at speed to ensure we are accommodating the health care requirements for CDR Benson while also ensuring all necessary notifications are made (families, PSM's, SN/SD, NSC, etc...) along with a media statement -- all being mapped out and coordinated with OLA, CHINFO and your team.

OPT Lead (CAPT Tim Rexrode) is putting together an aggressive timeline for notifications to support a mid-week next week NJP notification/start. I will get you the "POA&M" by COB tomorrow if not much earlier.

More to follow. Thanks for the call earlier.

VR, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00  
Sent: Wednesday, August 09, 2017 9:42 PM

To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
Cc: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Crawford, James W VADM JAG  
Subject: Intentions on FTZ Accountability

CNO, VCNO and Jim,

For your consideration, below the tearline is a brief summary of C7F's intentions on FTZ accountability. Joey and I discussed his intentions over TANDBERG today. After considering in detail all the options available I support his proposed actions fully. The Dual Purpose Investigation/JAGMAN necessitates holding members of the FTZ accountable for their failures in Leadership, Navigation, Seamanship and Shiphandling.

I wanted to pass this information along to this small distro before sending out the formal notification to a wider audience on SIPR. Joey intends to hold Admiral's Mast next week to afford time for the CO to execute his orders in August.

Once I hear back that you have reviewed the below, I will send out the formal notification over SIPR to all stakeholders, you gentlemen as well.

CNO, I believe you are out of the office through the week, so please let me know if you would prefer I send the formal notification encrypted on NIPR vice SIPR for ease of access.

Standing by for any questions or guidance you might have.

Very Respectfully,

Notso

ADM Scott H. Swift  
Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet

- 
1. CDR Bryce Benson, CO: NJP (Dereliction of Duty and Hazarding a Vessel) and DFC
  2. CDR Sean Babbit, XO: DFC
  3. CDR Robert Shu, Former CO: Matter of interest in record
  4. CMDCM Brice Baldwin, CMC: DFC and removal of Command Senior Enlisted NEC code
  5. LTJG Sarah Coppock, OOD: NJP (Dereliction of Duty and Hazarding a Vessel), DFC and recommend removal of SWO designator
  6. LT Natalie Combs, TAO: NJP (Dereliction of Duty), DFC and recommend removal of SWO designator
  7. LT Raven Parker, JOOD: NJP (Dereliction of Duty), DFC and revocation of DH recommendation
  8. LT Irian Woodley, SWC: NJP (Dereliction of Duty and Hazarding a Vessel) and DFC
  9. LTJG William Couch, NAV: NJP (Dereliction of Duty)
  10. LTJG Barada Moncravie, CIC Watch Officer: NJP (Dereliction of Duty) and DFC
  11. ENS Francis Womack, CONN: Letter of Instruction and requalify for bridge watchstanding
  12. FCAC Jeremy Johnson, CSO: NJP (Dereliction of Duty)
  13. OS1 Rainford Graham, CIC Watch Supervisor: NJP (Dereliction of Duty)
  14. QM1 Carlos Clark, QM of the Watch/Assistant NAV: Letter of Instruction
  15. OS2 Matthew Stawecki, SWS: Letter of Instruction and requalify as SWS



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U.S. AUGUST 17, 2017 / 6:21 PM / 9 MONTHS AGO

# U.S. Navy, citing poor seamanship, removes commanders of warship in deadly crash

Idrees Ali, Tim Kelly

4 MIN READ



WASHINGTON/TOKYO (Reuters) - The U.S. Navy has removed the two senior officers and the senior enlisted sailor on a U.S. warship that almost sank off the coast of Japan in June after it was struck by a Philippine container ship, the Navy said on Friday.

FILE PHOTO : The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald, damaged by colliding with a Philippine-flagged merchant vessel, is seen at the U.S. naval base in Yokosuka,, Japan June 18, 2017.  
REUTERS/Toru Hanai/File Photo

Multiple investigations have yet to apportion blame for the accident that killed seven U.S. sailors aboard the guided missile destroyer the USS Fitzgerald.

However, the punishments are the first public admission by the U.S. Navy that mistakes by the crew contributed to the deadliest incident on a U.S. warship since Islamist extremists bombed the USS Cole in Yemen's Aden harbor in 2000.

"The collision was avoidable and both ships demonstrated poor seamanship. Within Fitzgerald, flawed watch stander teamwork and inadequate leadership contributed to the collision," the U.S. Seventh Fleet said in a media release.

In the first detailed account from one of those directly involved in the collision in the early hours of June 17, the captain of the cargo ship the ACX Crystal said in a report seen by Reuters his crew signaled the Fitzgerald with flashing lights around 10 minutes before the collision. The Fitzgerald did not respond or alter course, it said..

The commercial vessel had the right-of-way under maritime rules and the Fitzgerald, which was hit on the starboard side, was likely at fault.

Several U.S. and Japanese investigations are still under way into how the Fitzgerald and the much larger ACX Crystal collided in clear weather south of Tokyo Bay.

One pertinent question, said two naval officers who spoke on condition of anonymity, is what was happening at the time in the Fitzgerald's Combat Information Center, where crew members monitor radar that should have detected the approach of a 30,000-ton cargo vessel.

Commander Bryce Benson was relieved "due to a loss of confidence in his ability to lead", the Seventh Fleet said.

Commander Sean Babbitt and Master Chief Petty Officer Brice Baldwin "contributed to the lack of watch stander preparedness and readiness that was evident in the events leading up to the collision", it said.

Several other junior officers have also been relieved, with administrative action taken against other members of the ship's watch teams.

## "SERIOUS MISTAKES"

Admiral Bill Moran, deputy chief of naval operations, told a media briefing earlier in Washington that about nine sailors would face administrative punishments.

"Serious mistakes were made by members of the crew, and there was no benefit to waiting on taking accountability actions," Moran said.

An official report released on Thursday contained dramatic accounts of what happened when the freighter hit the Fitzgerald.

The collision, at 1:30 a.m. local time, tore a gash below the Fitzgerald's waterline and sent water pouring into the warship, the report said.

"Water on deck," sailors in a berthing area started yelling. "Get out," they shouted as mattresses, furniture, and even an exercise bicycle began to float.

The berthing was completely flooded within 60 seconds, although more than two dozen of the 35 sailors in it escaped. The last sailor to be rescued was in the bathroom at the time of the collision.

"Lockers were floating past him, ... at one point he was pinned between the lockers and the ceiling of Berthing 2, but was able to reach for a pipe in the ceiling to pull himself free," the report said.

Two sailors stayed at the foot of the ladder in the compartment to help others escape.

"The choices made by these two sailors likely saved the lives of at least two of their shipmates," the report said.

Benson was trapped in his cabin and five sailors used a sledgehammer to break through the door.

"Even after the door was open, there was a large amount of debris and furniture against the door, preventing anyone from entering or exiting easily," the report said.

The sailors tied themselves to each other with a belt and rescued Benson, who was hanging from the side of the ship.

Reporting by Idrees Ali in WASHINGTON and Tim Kelly in TOKYO; Editing by Yara Bayoumy, John Walcott, Leslie Adler and Paul Tait

*Our Standards:* *The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.*

# USS Fitzgerald's leadership removed from their duties over June collision

By [Ryan Browne](#), CNN

Updated 9:30 AM ET, Fri August 18, 2017

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## Initial investigation blames Navy for crash 01:16

**(CNN)** — The commanding officer, executive officer and senior non-commissioned officer of the USS Fitzgerald have been removed from their duties for cause amid the fallout surrounding the deadly collision between the USS Fitzgerald and a cargo ship off the coast of Japan on June 17.

"We've lost trust and confidence in their ability to lead in those positions and they will not return to the ship," Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. William Moran told reporters at the Pentagon late Thursday. The 7th Fleet also said several junior officers were relieved of duty.

While the final investigation into the collision is ongoing, Moran said: "We do not have to have the investigation complete to start the process."

The Fitzgerald's commanding officer, Cdr. Bryce Benson, and the executive officer, Cdr. Sean Babbiit, were both sleeping, and the master chief petty officer, Brice Baldwin, were not on the bridge at the time of the collision, according to the Navy.

The bow of the cargo ship directly struck the commander's cabin, according to the Navy's report detailing the immediate aftermath of the collision.

The report said Benson "was hanging from the side of the ship" when he was retrieved by crewmembers who were forced to use a sledgehammer, kettlebell and their bodies to break through the door and gain access to the heavily damaged cabin.

Benson was medically evacuated via helicopter due to the severity of his injuries and he was placed on limited duty status on July 11.

"There are a lot of sailors" who have undergone the non-judicial punishment process and "survived and done well," Moran said, but "when you look at what happened here, it's going to be pretty hard to recover from this."

"Serious mistakes were made by members of the crew," Moran said, adding that "clearly at some point the bridge team lost situational awareness."

One additional sailor has already undergone the captain's mast. Several other sailors are due to go through the process, including the people who were on watch that night.

The Navy also plans to review its training and qualification procedures in the wake of the deadly collision, in which the Fitzgerald was heavily damaged. It will have to be brought back to the US for repairs.

"The collision was avoidable and both ships demonstrated poor seamanship. Within Fitzgerald, flawed watchstander teamwork and inadequate leadership contributed to the collision that claimed the lives of seven Fitzgerald sailors, injured three more, and damaged both ships," the 7th Fleet said in a statement.

The Navy's report on the immediate aftermath provides a harrowing account of US sailors attempting to escape a rapidly flooding sleeping area that filled with water within minutes after the cargo ship's bow tore a hole in the side of the Fitzgerald. Of the 35 sailors in the sleeping area at the time of the collision, 28 were able to escape, but the remaining seven sailors died.

The report describes a chaotic scene following the collision between the Fitzgerald and the much larger cargo ship. Some sailors were thrown from their beds, while others remained asleep. Sailors ran through the sleeping area, attempting to awaken their still-sleeping crew members.

"At least one sailor had to be pulled from his rack and into the water before he woke up," the report said, referring to the Naval term for a bed.

The crew had to move quickly to escape the area using a ladder before the sleeping area became completely flooded, with the report saying the room "was nearly flooded within a span of 30 to 60 seconds."

"By the time the third sailor to leave arrived at the ladder, the water was already waist deep," the report said.

Rear Adm. Charles F. Williams, who led the probe into the collision, wrote in the memo accompanying the report that the sailors in that sleeping area "should be commended for their response to the dangerous and deadly threat they faced."

Moran said the investigation will have to be completed before any medals or awards can be adjudicated to any sailors for acts of heroism.

An acting commanding officer had been assigned to the Fitzgerald following the collision, and a permanent replacement, Cdr. Garrett Miller, has been identified and is expected to take command soon.

The full investigation will have to be completed in order for the Navy to assign responsibility for the collision.

**Your Navy**

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**Fitzgerald's CO and sailors standing watch face discipline in fatal collision****By: Geoff Ziezulewicz** (/author/geoff-ziezulewicz)

August 17, 2017

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**Watch standers to face non-judicial punishment in incident that killed seven sailors**

The Navy plans to discipline up to a dozen Fitzgerald sailors, including the commanding officer, in connection to the destroyer's fatal June collision with a commercial ship that led to the drownings of seven sailors in their berthing.

In addition to Cmdr. Bryce Benson, the CO who was injured when the ACX Crystal struck the ship on June 17, the executive officer, Cmdr. Sean M. Babbitt, and Command Master Chief Brice A. Baldwin will also undergo non-judicial punishment this week, Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Bill Moran said Thursday.

The command triad will be detached from the Fitzgerald once the disciplinary proceedings are finished, Moran said.

Moran discussed the disciplinary measures Thursday after the release of a 41-page investigation ([https://partner-mco-archive.s3.amazonaws.com/client\\_files/1503000639.pdf](https://partner-mco-archive.s3.amazonaws.com/client_files/1503000639.pdf)) into the crew's harrowing response to the catastrophe. The report does not offer any details about the events leading up to the collision, which have not been made public,





Sample Berthing 2 Racks



FITZGERALD Berthing 2 Racks Post-Deflooding

(/news/your-military/2017/08/17/water-on-deck-get-out-the-navys-official-report-of-the-fitzgeralds-catastrophe-at-sea/)

**'Water on deck!' 'Get out!' — The Navy's official report of the Fitzgerald's catastrophe at sea (/news/your-military/2017/08/17/water-on-deck-get-out-the-navys-official-report-of-the-fitzgeralds-catastrophe-at-sea/)**

Sailors had less than a minute to escape as seawater blasted through a massive hole in the destroyer Fitzgerald after a container ship struck its starboard side on June 19.

**By: Geoff Ziezulewicz**

Benson was trapped in his quarters after the Crystal struck the Fitz's starboard side, and he was found hanging from the side of the ship, according to a Navy report released Thursday (<http://www.navytimes.com/news/your-military/2017/08/17/water-on-deck-get-out-the-navys-official-report-of-the-fitzgeralds-catastrophe-at-sea/>).

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He was relieved of command earlier this summer. Navy officials said at the time that the relief was so that Benson could recover from his injuries.



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Divers will assess the damage and try to access spaces that flooded when Fitzgerald collided with a merchant ship four-times its size.

**By: David Larter**

Seventh Fleet head Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin has completed NJP proceedings for one Fitz sailor this week and is expected to conduct similar proceedings for the others on Friday in Japan, Moran said.

Moran declined to say whether the triad will face administrative separation from the Navy.

Other sailors slated to be disciplined include “people that were on watch that night,” he said.

Moran said “the bridge lost situational awareness” before the Crystal struck the destroyer at about 1:30 a.m. local time off the coast of Japan.

The rate of closure and lack of maneuver space meant there was “not enough time nor room” to avoid a collision, he said.

Moran declined to say whether any alarm sounded before the collision.

A timeline of events in the line of duty report released Thursday makes no mention of any pre-collision alarm, but states that the Fitzgerald sounded “a collision alarm for two seconds” two minutes after impact.

The Navy generally does not disclose the identifies of those who undergo non-judicial punishment.

Other Navy investigations regarding who was at fault in the collision remain ongoing, and Moran declined to discuss the details.

He said that disciplining Fitzgerald sailors does not indicate the destroyer's crew was solely at fault.

“We don't know yet whether the Fitzgerald is fully responsible for the mishap,” he said. “But we know mistakes were made.”

More disciplinary actions could come about as investigations continue, Moran said.

Enclosure D

Page 11 of 22

The portions of a line of duty investigation released Thursday are generally used to determine what happened for the sake of survivor's benefits.

The Navy has completed its safety investigation into the fatal collision.

The sea service's third investigation into the incident involves which parties were at fault, as well as any potential monetary settlements, Moran said.

"It is not over," he said. "We've got a ways to go."

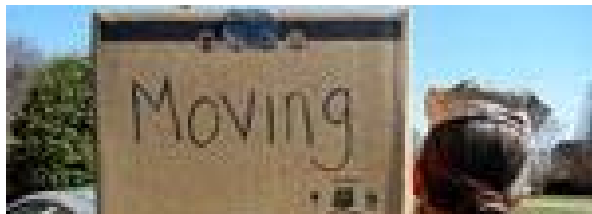
Moran said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson would fully explain what happened after the investigations are completed.

He estimated that such a public explanation would come "weeks from now."

Benson took command of the Fitzgerald less than a month before the fatal incident.

Babbitt came aboard in March, while Baldwin had been on the Fitzgerald since 2014, according to Navy records.

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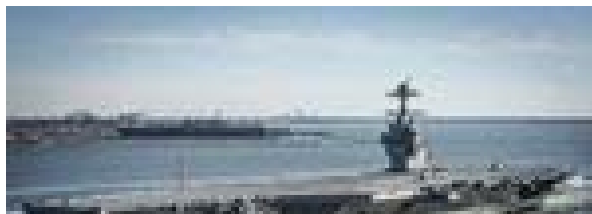
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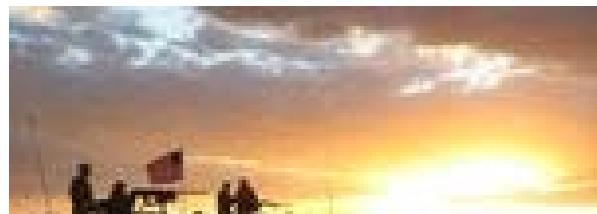
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## The New York Times

# *Top Two Officers on Navy Ship in Deadly Collision Off Japan Are Relieved of Duties*

By Eric Schmitt

Aug. 17, 2017

WASHINGTON — The two top officers aboard a destroyer during a deadly collision off the coast of Japan in June were relieved of their duties on Friday, the Navy’s Seventh Fleet said. A number of other sailors were punished for their roles in the crash.

The announcement followed the release of a harrowing preliminary report on the collision between the destroyer Fitzgerald and a freighter that killed seven people aboard the American ship. It was one of the Navy’s deadliest accidents in years.

The ship’s captain, Cmdr. Bryce Benson; his second-in-command; and the senior enlisted sailor were relieved of their duties by the head of the Seventh Fleet in Japan, Vice Adm. Joseph P. Aucoin. A statement from the fleet said “inadequate leadership” had contributed to the collision.

The statement said a number of other sailors would face disciplinary action. A senior Navy officer said Thursday that about a dozen sailors in total would be punished, including all those on watch the night of June 17.

The preliminary report described in detail the terrible moments after the collision and the rescue efforts aboard the ship.

Dozens of sailors who were rocked from their slumber, the report said, raced in the dark to escape from their flooding quarters. Within 90 seconds, seawater rushing through a gaping hole in the starboard hull was at first waist-deep, then neck-high as sailors pushed aside mattresses, wall lockers and other floating debris to clamber up a ladder to safety. The last sailor pulled from the chaos was underwater when his shipmates yanked him up.

The freighter crashed directly into Commander Benson’s stateroom, ripping open a huge hole and trapping him inside. It took five sailors, using a sledgehammer and kettlebell, 25 minutes to break down the door to his cabin to rescue the captain, who was seriously injured and hanging from the side of the ship.

In summing up the failures of the captain and his crew, the vice chief of naval operations, Adm. Bill Moran, said the report made clear that “serious mistakes were made by members of the crew.” As the shipping lanes got more crowded that night, Admiral Moran said the sailors on



watch “lost situational awareness,” and by the time they realized their errors, it was too late to avoid a collision with the much larger freighter.

What the report released on Thursday did not answer, and what is still under a separate ongoing investigation, is how the collision could have happened. Were lookouts on watch scanning the seas for other ships and, if so, why did they not see the 728-foot freighter, the ACX Crystal, stacked with more than 1,000 containers, bearing on the destroyer?

How did radar officers on the bridge and in the combat information center below fail to detect the freighter closing in? And why was Commander Benson not awakened and summoned to the bridge, as standard protocol requires, to ensure safe passage?

Admiral Moran said it could be weeks before the investigation is completed into the causes and culpability for the accident.



Sample Berthing 2 Racks



FITZGERALD Berthing 2 Racks Post-Deflooding

Images in the report compare what the berthing, or sleeping, racks usually look like and the damaged racks on the Fitzgerald. U.S. Navy

Commander Benson and the Fitzgerald’s second-in-command executive officer, Comdr. Sean Babbitt, both of whom were asleep in their cabins when the ships collided, and the Fitzgerald’s senior enlisted sailor, Master Chief Petty Officer Brice Baldwin, were relieved of their duties

aboard the Fitzgerald. Commander Benson, as well as several sailors on watch that night, will face what the military calls nonjudicial punishment.

In today's competitive Navy, the chances of these men being promoted with such black marks on their records is extremely remote.

Admiral Moran cautioned that as the investigation into the accident's cause proceeds, more sailors could face disciplinary action. It was not clear whether any crew members would face court-martial.

The report laid out a chilling scenario in which sailors were awakened suddenly by a loud noise and forced to evacuate amid fast-rising waters and in near-darkness.

The two ships that collided could not have been more different.

The 9,000-ton, \$1.5 billion Fitzgerald, operating out of the Yokosuka naval base, was wrapping up a long day of training. The 29,000-ton Crystal, which is more than 200 feet longer than the Fitzgerald, had been chartered by a Japanese company to bring cargo from Nagoya, on Japan's central coast, to Tokyo. Manned by a Filipino crew, it was far less damaged than the Fitzgerald.

Within seconds of the collision, seawater poured through a 13- by 17-foot hole in the starboard hull, and the 505-foot Fitzgerald listed sharply to the starboard side. The ship radio room was damaged, and much of its communications gear ruined or left without power. Below decks, the crew was plunged into darkness except for red emergency lights.

United States Navy ships and their crews train extensively for emergencies on board such as collisions and fires. Emergency crews responded immediately to reports of damage and trapped sailors across the ship.

The Fitzgerald had a crew of about 300 sailors, and the crisis focused on a sleeping compartment called Berthing 2, which has 42 beds in triple bunks spanning one side of the ship across to the other, two decks below the main deck.

The area also had a lounge filled with sofas, chairs, a table and a television set.

Of the 42 sailors assigned to Berthing 2 at the time of collision, five were on watch and two were not aboard ship. Of the 35 remaining sailors in the crew area, 28 escaped the flooding and seven died.

Some of the surviving sailors said they heard a loud noise at the time of impact. Others were thrown from their beds. Still others said they did not realize what happened and stayed in bed. Some remained asleep.

Within seconds, though, sailors were yelling, “Water on deck! Get out!” Others began waking up shipmates who had slept through the initial impact. At least one had to be pulled from his bed and into the water before he woke up. Senior sailors checked for any who might still be in their beds.

Sailors told investigators that after the initial shock, they lined up calmly and orderly and walked several steps through the rushing water to climb a port side ladder and escape through a watertight hatch.



A sketch drawn by a sailor on the Fitzgerald shows others exiting the flooded berthing area. U.S. Navy

By the time the last group of sailors arrived at the bottom of the ladder, the water was up to their necks. Two sailors who had been helping others from the bottom of the ladder were eventually forced to climb the ladder as water reached the very top of the berthing compartment.

Once through the hatch, the sailors continued to search, reaching into the dark water to try to find anyone they could. From the top of the ladder, the two sailors pulled two others from the flooded compartment. Both of the rescued sailors were completely underwater when they were pulled to safety.

The last sailor to be pulled up from the murky darkness had been in the bathroom at the time of the collision and a flood of water knocked him to the floor. At one point he was pinned between the lockers floating past him and the compartment ceiling, but he was able to reach for a pipe on the ceiling to pull himself free. He made his way to the only light he could see, which was coming from the portside hatch.

He was swimming toward the hatch, the report said, “when he was pulled from the water, red-faced and with bloodshot eyes. He reported that when taking his final breath before being saved, he was already submerged and breathed in water.”

Twenty-seven sailors escaped Berthing 2 from the port side. One other sailor escaped from the starboard side.

A Japanese coast guard helicopter lowered a rescue basket to lift the badly injured Commander Benson off the listing ship and whisk him to a Navy hospital in Yokosuka. Other American and Japanese military vessels and aircraft helped in the rescue effort.

Just before 5 a.m., with the flooding stabilized and operating under its own power, the Fitzgerald slowly started making its way back to port.

The next day, June 18, the bodies of the seven men who died were recovered by Navy divers from flooded spaces that had been sealed off to keep the ship from foundering, a wrenching decision by officers in the chaotic aftermath of the crash.

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Top Two Officers on Navy Ship in Deadly Collision Off Japan Are Relieved of Duties - The New York Times

A version of this article appears in print on Aug. 18, 2017, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Navy to Punish About a Dozen In Japan Crash

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## NEWS

# Navy Fires Commander, XO from USS Fitzgerald for Fatal Collision



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returns to Fleet Activities (FLEACT) Yokosuka, Japan, on June 17, 2017, following a collision with a merchant vessel. (U.S. Navy photo/Peter Burghart)

Military.com | By Richard Sisk

The commander of the destroyer USS Fitzgerald and the executive officer have been permanently detached from the ship and face non-judicial punishment over the deadly collision in June with a container ship, the Navy announced Thursday.

Cmdr. Bryce Benson, commander of the Fitzgerald, and Cmdr. Sean Babbitt, the executive officer, are "being detached for cause," meaning that the Navy "has lost trust and confidence in their ability to lead," Adm. Bill Moran, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, said during a press conference.

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Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, commander of the 7th Fleet, has also decided that the top enlisted sailor aboard the Fitzgerald and several other sailors on the watch crew at the time of the collision on June 17 will also face non-judicial punishment, Moran said.

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Associated Press reported that "serious mistakes were made by the crew," Moran said.

The Fitzgerald was hit nearly broadside by the ACX Crystal cargo ship in the early morning hours of June 17 in Japanese waters. Seven sailors aboard the [Arleigh Burke-class](#) destroyer Fitzgerald were killed.

The service members, whose bodies were found in flooded berthing compartments, on Thursday were [posthumously promoted](#).

The top enlisted sailor on the Fitzgerald was later identified as Chief Petty Officer Brice Baldwin. He, Benson and Babbitt were all in their berths when the collision occurred.

However, Aucoin found that all three bore chief responsibility for the watch crew on the bridge losing "situational awareness" as the destroyer was proceeding at about 20 knots on a clear moonlit night in relatively calm seas, Moran said.

When asked if the non-judicial punishment against Benson, Babbitt and Baldwin would be career ending, Moran said: "Look at what happened here -- it's going to be pretty hard to recover from this." Moran said investigations were continuing but he declined to speculate on whether courts martial might be pursued against any of the Fitzgerald's crew.

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- [Stories of Fitzgerald Sailors Killed in Destroyer-Container Ship Crash](#)
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Since the accident occurred, naval experts have pondered how a fast and agile destroyer carrying some of the world's most advanced radars and proceeding on a clear moonlit night in calm seas could have been hit nearly broadside by a slow and plodding cargo ship.

The speculation has centered on whether the bridge watch crew was either poorly trained or simply not alert. Moran said only that collisions should not happen in the U.S. Navy -- "We got it wrong."

A "line of duty" investigation released by the Navy earlier Thursday on actions following the collision gave evidence of the enormous damage inflicted on the Fitzgerald and the heroic actions of the crew in saving the ship and their fellow sailors.

Berthing Area 2, two decks below the main deck where 35 sailors were sleeping in three-decker buns, was exposed to the open sea, the investigation said. The bulbous nose of the ACX Crystal had ripped a 13x17 foot hole into the side of the Fitzgerald.

"As a result, nothing separated Berthing 2 from the onrushing sea, allowing a great volume of water to enter Berthing 2 very quickly," the investigation said. The seven sailors killed in the collision were all in Berthing 2. They were "directly in the path of the onrushing water," the investigation said.

The force of the collision knocked the Fitzgerald into a 14-degree list to port before the ship rocked back violently into a seven-degree list to starboard. "One sailor saw another knocked out of his rack by water," the investigation said.

"Others began waking up shipmates who had slept through the initial impact. At least one sailor had to be pulled from his rack and into the water before he woke up," the investigation said.

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The sailors were in water up to their necks as they scrambled to reach a ladder to safety. The last rescued sailor had been in the bathroom at the time of the crash. Other sailors "pulled him from the water, red-faced and with bloodshot eyes. He reported he was taking his final breath before being saved," the investigation said.

-- Richard Sisk can be reached at [richard.sisk@military.com](mailto:richard.sisk@military.com).

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**To:** [Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO](#); [joseph.aucoin@fe.navy.mil](mailto:joseph.aucoin@fe.navy.mil); [Richardson, John M ADM CNO](#)  
**Cc:** [Renshaw, Curt CAPT OPNAV, VCNO](#)  
**Subject:** RE: First FTZ Clip  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2017 18:48:12

---

Bill,

As CNO said. Well done. If this is the tone and tenor of all the following reports we are in as good a place as we could be.

Thanks you.

ATB,

Notso

---

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2017 12:28:50 PM  
To: Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; [joseph.aucoin@fe.navy.mil](mailto:joseph.aucoin@fe.navy.mil); Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
Cc: Renshaw, Curt CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: FW: First FTZ Clip

Well, that didn't take long....and reporter didn't get DFC quite right. VR, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Hockycko, Ashley A LCDR OPNAV, N00P  
Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2017 6:23 PM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Cc: Renshaw, Curt CAPT OPNAV, VCNO; Rexrode, Timothy A CAPT OPNAV, N09; Wallace, Dustin E CDR OPNAV, RLSO SW; Griffo, Joseph T LCDR OPNAV, N09 JAG; OKeefe, Christopher J LT OPNAV, N09  
Subject: First FTZ Clip

Admiral,

First FTZ Clip from USA Today with headline that the CO has been relieved

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V/r  
Ashley

Commander of stricken destroyer Fitzgerald relieved after Navy report cites failures  
Tom Vanden Brook, USA TODAY  
17 Aug 17

WASHINGTON - The head of the Navy's 7th Fleet has relieved the skipper of the USS Fitzgerald and two other officers for losing "situational awareness" in the hours leading up to a fatal June collision that left seven sailors dead, the service's deputy chief said Thursday.

Adm. Bill Moran, the deputy chief of naval operations, said that Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin relieved Cmdr. Bryce Benson for cause after a report detailing the June 17 collision between the Fitzgerald and the freighter ACX Crystal

was released by the Navy.

The ship's entire leadership, Moran said, will be relieved, and about a dozen sailors face punishment, including all of the destroyer's watch.

The command team of three have been relieved. About nine others face non-judicial punishment.

Further sanctions are possible, Moran said.

Aucoin acted swiftly because the investigation indicated serious mistakes were made by the crew, Moran said. The Navy has lost confidence in those sailors.

Collisions should never happen, Moran said. "We got it wrong."

A "loud noise" roused some of the sailors in the Fitzgerald's Berthing 2 compartment, the accident report said. Some in the ship's sleeping and living quarters "felt an unusual movement," while others slept through the initial crash.

Seconds after the ACX Crystal plowed into the starboard side of the Navy's guided missile destroyer at 1:30 a.m., on June 17, seawater gushed through a 13-foot-by-17-foot gash, knocking some from their beds and threatening to drown all 35 sailors in the compartment.

"Water on deck!" sailors shouted. "Get out!"

The harrowing moments and hours after the collision - and the heroism that saved the lives of all but seven of the 35 sailors in Berthing 2 - are recounted in the report.

It details the frantic efforts to account for all the sailors in the darkened, flooding compartment, keep the ship afloat, and rescue the ship's commander who dangled outside his crumpled cabin.

"The crew of the Fitzgerald fought hard in the dark of night to save their ship," wrote Rear Adm. C.F. Williams, commander of Carrier Strike Group Five. Williams' preliminary report looks at the injuries and deaths that resulted from the crash.

The Fitzgerald, with a crew of about 300 sailors, was about 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, Japan, at the time of the collision. The sea was calm, and the moon shone through broken clouds. The ship was dark but for navigation lights, and red bulbs inside.

The Crystal is a far larger ship at 728 feet and 29,000 tons, compared with the Fitzgerald's 505 feet and 9,000 tons. The port side of the Crystal's bow slammed into the Fitzgerald above the waterline, and the bulb-like bow below the surface crunched into the Fitzgerald near Berthing 2.

#### Flooding in Berthing 2

Berthing 2 held 42 beds in stacks of three bunks, a bathroom, and a lounge area. It contained a lounge with sofas, chairs and a television. After the collision, "nothing separated Berthing 2 from the onrushing sea, allowing a great volume of water to enter Berthing 2 very quickly."

The Fitzgerald rocked violently, settling into a 7-degree list to her starboard side.

"One sailor saw another knocked out of his rack by water," according to the report. "Others began waking up shipmates who had slept through the initial impact. At least one sailor had to be pulled from his rack and into the water before he woke up."

Within a minute, the compartment had flooded and the water rose. Mattresses, furniture and an exercise bike floated in the aisles. The tilting ship complicated the escape, and the water was neck high by the time many had reached the ladder to climb to safety.



As the water forced them to the top of the stairs, two sailors reached into the dark water and fished two more shipmates out. The last rescued sailor had been in the bathroom at the time of the crash. The sailors "pulled him from the water, red-faced and with bloodshot eyes. He reported he was taking is final breath before being saved, he was already submerged and breathed in water."

The seven sailors who drowned were nearest the gash, "directly in the path of the onrushing water."

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## 7th Fleet Announces USS Fitzgerald Accountability Determinations

Story Number: NNS170817-25 Release Date: 8/17/2017 11:34:00 PM

A A A  

By U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan (NNS) -- The commanding officer, executive officer and command master chief of the guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) were relieved of their duties by Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, Commander, 7th Fleet Aug. 18.

Additionally, a number of officer and enlisted watch standers were held accountable.

The determinations were made following a thorough review of the facts and circumstances leading up to the June 17 collision between Fitzgerald and the merchant vessel ACX Crystal.

The collision was avoidable and both ships demonstrated poor seamanship. Within Fitzgerald, flawed watch stander teamwork and inadequate leadership contributed to the collision that claimed the lives of seven Fitzgerald Sailors, injured three more and damaged both ships.

With absolute accountability for the safe navigation of Fitzgerald, Cmdr. Bryce Benson was relieved due to a loss of confidence in his ability to lead. He had previously been temporarily relieved of his duties due to medical reasons from injuries sustained during the collision. Benson is being reassigned to Naval District Washington at the Washington Navy Yard, where he will have access to medical facilities in the area.

Inadequate leadership by the executive officer, Cmdr. Sean Babbitt, and command master chief, Master Chief Petty Officer Brice Baldwin, contributed to the lack of watch stander preparedness and readiness that was evident in the events leading up to the collision.

Several junior officers were relieved of their duties due to poor seamanship and flawed teamwork as bridge and combat information center watch standers. Additional administrative actions were taken against members of both watch teams.

Cmdr. Garret Miller will assume command from Fitzgerald's acting commanding officer, Cmdr. John "Jack" Fay sometime mid-to-late-August.

It was also evident from this review that the entire Fitzgerald crew demonstrated real toughness that night. Following the collision these Sailors responded with urgency, determination and creativity to save their ship. Their rigorous damage control efforts and dauntless fighting in the immediate wake of the accident prevented further loss of life.

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170817-N-N0101-321 WASHINGTON (August 17, 2017) U.S. 7th Fleet crest. (U.S. Navy graphic/Released)

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## **Navy tragedy Sailors missing in sea collision**

The New York Post

August 21, 2017 Monday

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**Section:** Late City Final; Pg. 19

**Length:** 400 words

**Byline:** Max Jaeger

### **Body**

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Ten sailors were missing and five injured early Monday when a US Navy destroyer collided with a merchant ship near Singapore - the second such crash in as many months.

The **USS** John S. **McCain** collided with the Liberian-registered oil tanker Alnic MC in the Strait of Malacca at about 5:24 a.m. local time while it was on its way to a routine port visit in Singapore, according to a statement from the Navy.

The guided-missile destroyer sustained damage to its rear-left side, officials said.

Five people were hurt and crews were searching for 10 others. Four of the injured were taken by helicopter to a hospital in Singapore. The fifth required no treatment.

While returning to the White House on Sunday night, President Trump was asked about the naval mishap and responded, "That's too bad."

About two hours later, he tweeted that "thoughts & prayers" are with the sailors.

The 505-foot-long destroyer is named for Arizona Sen. John **McCain**'s father and grandfather, who were both Navy admirals. **McCain** offered his condolences.

"Cindy & I are keeping America's sailors aboard the **USS** John S **McCain** in our prayers tonight - appreciate the work of search & rescue crews," he tweeted.

A search-and-rescue mission was under way involving Singaporean ships, helicopters and tug boats, as well as US Navy aircraft.

The **USS McCain** entered service in 1994 and is staffed by a crew of 23 officers, 24 chief petty officers and 291 enlisted sailors.

The collision is the second such incident in two months. Seven sailors were killed when the ACX Crystal, a cargo ship, rammed the **USS** Fitzgerald off the coast of Japan on June 17. The sailors, ages 19 to 37, drowned after water rushed into their sleeping compartments, marking the greatest loss of life on a Navy ship since the **USS** Cole was bombed in Yemen in 2000, killing 17.

A scathing report issued just days ago by the Navy found that the Fitzgerald's crew made "a slew" of mistakes in the minutes leading up to the incident.

## Navy tragedy Sailors missing in sea collision

About a dozen sailors - including the ship's commanding officer and other senior leaders - are expected to face punishment for the crash because the Navy "lost trust and confidence in their ability to lead," naval officials said Thursday.

Both the **USS McCain** and **USS** Fitzgerald are Arleigh Burke-class destroyers based at the 7th Fleet's home port of Yokosuka, Japan. With Wires

[mjaeger@nypost.com](mailto:mjaeger@nypost.com)

## Graphic

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Drama at sea: A rescue mission was under way after the **USS** John S. **McCain** (above) collided with an oil tanker off the Singapore coast. [AP]

**Load-Date:** August 21, 2017

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## **US Navy crash: 10 sailors missing after destroyer USS John McCain collides with oil tanker off Singapore; Accident comes after USS Fitzgerald involved in fatal collision**

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 21, 2017 Monday 3:48 AM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS; Version:2

**Length:** 524 words

**Byline:** Sam Holmes, Lesley Wroughton

### **Body**

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Ten sailors are missing after an American warship collided with an oil tanker east of Singapore in the second accident involving US Navy destroyers in little more than two months.

The guided-missile destroyer **USS John S McCain** collided with the merchant vessel Alnic MC while heading to Singapore for a routine port call, the Navy said in a statement.

"Initial reports indicate John S **McCain** sustained damage to her port side aft," the Navy said. "There are currently 10 sailors missing and five injured."

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US Navy stops search for seven missing sailors after bodies found

A search-and-rescue mission was under way involving Singaporean ships, helicopters and tug boats, as well as US Navy aircraft.

"Thoughts & prayers are w/ our @USNavy sailors aboard the #USSJohnSMcCain where search & rescue efforts are underway," Donald Trump tweeted as operations continued.

The warship was sailing under its own power and heading to port, the Navy said.

The Alnic MC is a Liberian-flagged, 183 metre-long oil or chemical tanker of 50,760 deadweight tonnes, according to shipping data in Thomson Reuters Eikon.

Seven sailors were killed in the incident (AP)

Shipping data showed it last sent a transponder signal at 2258 GMT Sunday and has since come to a halt 6-12 miles off the east coast of the Pengerang peninsula in Johor, southern Malaysia. The ship data showed it was "ballasting", meaning that it was not loaded full of oil for cargo.

US Navy crash: 10 sailors missing after destroyer USS John McCain collides with oil tanker off Singapore;  
Accident comes after USS Fitzgerald involved in fatal ....

The waterways around Singapore are some of the busiest and most important in the world, carrying around a quarter of the world's trade in goods and oil.

The US Navy said last week it had removed the two senior officers and the senior enlisted sailor on a warship that almost sank off the coast of Japan in June after it was struck by a Philippine container ship.

That collision killed seven US sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer the USS Fitzgerald.

The USS Fitzgerald and USS John S McCain are both ballistic missile defence (BMD) capable ships and part of the same Japan-based destroyer squadron. The Seventh Fleet has six ships assigned to BMD patrols, with half of those out on patrol at any one time.

Asked whether the US Navy would need to bring forward other ships to maintain its strength, a spokesman for the Seventh Fleet said it was "way too early to know".

North Korea threatened last week to fire ballistic missiles towards the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, ratcheting up tensions with Mr Trump, who had threatened to unleash "fire and fury" on Pyongyang if it threatened the United States.

The vessel involved in the latest collision is named for the father and grandfather of US Republican Senator John McCain, who were both admirals in the United States Navy.

"Cindy & I are keeping America's sailors aboard the USS John S McCain in our prayers tonight - appreciate the work of search & rescue crews," Mr McCain said on Twitter.

Senator McCain is a Vietnam War-era naval aviator who was shot down and held prisoner for five-and-a-half years. He is now undergoing treatment for brain cancer.

Reuters

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## VIDEO: CNO Announces Operational Pause, Investigation Following USS John McCain Collision

August 21, 2017 12:08 PM

*The following is an Aug. 21, 2017 video and partial transcript of a release by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson announcing a fleet-wide operational pause and investigation into Navy operations around Japan.*



Like you I was devastated and heartbroken to hear about the collision off John McCain off of Singapore.

Adm. Swift, commander of Pacific Fleet is in route to take charge to make sure they have all of the assistance they need.

As you know, this is the second collision in three months and the [latest] of a series of incidents in the Pacific theater. This trend demands more forceful action. As such, I've directed an operational pause be taken in all of our fleets around the world.

I want our fleet commander to get together with their leaders and their commands to ensure that we're taking all appropriate to ensure safe and effective operations around the world.

In addition to that operational pause, I've directed a more comprehensive review to ensure that we get at the contributing factors – the root causes – of these incidents.

This review is in addition of the investigations that are looking into the collisions of the USS *Fitzgerald* and now the USS *John McCain*. I've asked Adm. Phil Davidson, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, to take charge of that investigation and we will examine the process by which we train and certify our forces that are forward deployed in Japan to make sure that we're doing everything we can to make sure they're ready for operations and warfighting. This will include – but not be limited to – looking at operational tempo, trends in personnel, material, maintenance and equipment. It will also include a review of how we train and certify our surface warfare community, including tactical and navigational proficiency.

Now I want to make as many resources across the Navy available to Adm. Davidson to conduct this review. That will include the Naval Inspector General, the Naval Safety Center and others. I want this to be a broad and diverse team – including officers and enlisted from across the Navy and also people outside the Navy, the other services and the private sector.

I want this team to be as diverse as they can be so we don't miss anything in our review.

This review will be on a very tight timeline. I want to get frequent updates. This requires urgent action. We need to get to it and take corrective action.

Finally, I will be getting updates throughout and will be keeping our leadership informed.

In closing, our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of USS *John McCain* and USS *Fitzgerald*. We need to get to the bottom of this, so let's get to it.



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**Navy Stands Up Naval Surface Group Western Pacific To Train, Certify Forward-Deployed Surface Ships After Recent Collisions**

September 19, 2017



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
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2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 24, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND

Subj: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF RECENT SURFACE FLEET INCIDENTS

1. During the last 69 days, the USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) and the USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56) were involved in two separate major collisions with commercial vessels while operating in the SEVENTH Fleet AOR. Recent events indicate these tragic incidents are not limited occurrences but part of a disturbing trend of mishaps involving U.S. warships in the AOR -- including the grounding of the USS ANTIETAM (CG 54) in January and a collision between the USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57) and a South Korean fishing vessel in May.

2. You are directed to lead a Comprehensive Review of surface fleet operations and incidents at sea that have occurred over the past decade with emphasis on SEVENTH Fleet operational employment to inform improvements Navy-wide. This review should address the following areas:

a. Individual training and professional development, to include seamanship, navigation, voyage planning, leadership development, officer and enlisted tactical training in formal schools and on the job;

b. Unit level training and operational performance, to include manning, personnel management, watchbill management, bridge (and CIC) team resource management, contact management, contact avoidance, leadership oversight and risk assessment/mitigation at all levels of the chain of command;

c. Development and certification of deployed operational and mission standards (Force Generation) with particular emphasis on Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDFN), to include validation of required certification standards, gaps between required standards and actual employment practices, effectiveness of leadership and oversight at all levels of the administrative and operational chains of command, maintaining and enforcing standards throughout FDFN assignment including self-assessment practices, external inspection reinforcement, and remedial action mitigation plans;

d. Deployed Operational Employment and Risk Management (Force Employment), to include Combatant Commander mission requirements, theater security cooperation requirements, maintenance impacts, other competing priorities (fleet experimentation, concept development), and their corresponding impact to operational tempo (OPTEMPO) and fundamental mariner and seamanship proficiency;

e. Material Readiness of electronic systems to include navigation equipment (e.g. AIS, radars, ECDIS, VMS, WSNs), propulsion and machinery to include steering systems, combat system modernization, and material availability;

f. Practical Utility of current navigation equipment and combat systems including sensors, tracking systems, displays, and internal communications networks to evaluate their effectiveness at integrating tactical data and providing situational awareness to our people.

3. As part of this review, request you make detailed recommendations with respect to corrective actions necessary to ensure the safety of our people, safe operations at sea, and the readiness of our forces. In the conduct of the review, you will seek input and insights from other services, industry, and highly qualified experts outside the services in order to ensure the widest possible perspective as we drive to the heart of the underlying issues and attack the root causes for these mishaps.

4. The final results of the review will be provided to me within 60 days, unless an extension is requested and granted.



W. F. MORAN

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**Admiral John Richardson, CNO**  
**MCPON Steven S. Giordano**  
**Facebook All Hands Call**  
**30 August 2017**

**Admiral Richardson:** Hello, Team. It's CNO Richardson here and I'm here with MCPON Giordano, and we're coming to you for the first time on Facebook Live as just another venue to try and reach out and connect. And boy, I'll tell you what, we have gotten a connection for sure. We put out a quick video to try and get some questions up front and we have been inundated with questions. Over 200 questions have come in, in preparation for this event. So we're going to try to get to as many as we can here, and what we don't get to on the broadcast, we'll make sure that we answer you directly via email.

So first and foremost as I start every one of my All Hands Calls with, and a lot of times we're doing these together, I want to start with just how proud I am of all the work that you do. We have 65,000 sailors deployed around the world. They are covering down on those important missions that we do to protect America and promote our interests around the world. You are doing fantastic work out there. So that's an important message to start off with.

Having said that, as you all know, we're going through some rough times right now, and we're going to get through that. We're going to address these problems. This type of broadcast where we can hear from you and you can hear from us is an important part of understanding how we're going to get at that. And when we get through it, we're going to be stronger and tougher on the other side.

MCPON, have you got anything you want to share with the team?

**MCPON Giordano:** Yes, sir. Just to kind of add on top of that getting through it, is having conversations about it. And this opportunity here, this live stream that people can continue to feed into and have those conversations, we're going to try to get to as many questions as possible. We can't get to them all, but we're going to try to get to as many as possible. So keeping that in mind, I'm ready to just get at this and start answering those questions that came from all of you.

**Admiral Richardson:** Okay. So the way we'll do it, we've got a lot of questions written down, and MCPON and I will just go back



and forth and we'll try and answer as many as we can. I'll start off.

This one comes from HM2 [Zwiefel] from the Naval Hospital in Pensacola. HM2 [Zwiefel] talks about the whole idea of this mindset of "doing more with less." With that mindset, the current trends seem to point to the fact that we're taking a pretty dangerous job, being done by a high reliability organization, and is this "do more with less" mindset eating into that? Is it making a tough job tougher; a dangerous job, more dangerous? So HM2 [Zwiefel] asks, what are we doing to improve these outcomes? Will there be more training where it matters? And she's concerned that it's not just afloat, but also ashore.

What a great question. And it's also kind of echoed by Petty Officer Kirk, Petty Officer [Tencrow], Petty Officer Williams, and Mr. Bolan.

Listen, I will tell you that one thing we have to do is really fight against this "do more with less" mindset. The thing that makes us a powerful Navy, a capable Navy, is that we have standards. Standards of performance, standards of safety, material readiness standards, those sorts of things. And when we perform, we must perform to those standards. And when we can't meet those standards, we've got to understand exactly what that means.

So I would encourage you to push back against this "do more with less." We want to make sure that we're properly resourced, whether that be money, whether that be fuel, whether that be parts, whether that be people. And we'll do exactly what we're resourced to, to the standards of performance that we've got.

If you let this "do more with less" mindset eat into our way of doing business, you start to see this kind of slow decline of readiness and it sneaks up on you. So you know what you need to do your job. We need to fight back against this idea that we can continue to do more of our mission with fewer resources. Keep these things in balance and understand where the differences lie.

Are we going to make adjustments in training? Almost certainly. We're constantly learning in the Navy, and we're constantly looking to do our business better. That includes training. So you can anticipate that we'll continue to learn and get better in the training department so that we can become more capable.

Anything to add to that?

**MCPON Giordano:** No, sir, but I think that segues right into the next question that we're going to talk about.

This comes from ET3 [Handigar], and there were some other folks that also had similar questions. Mr. Mark Jetty was one of them.

The question came in, and it talked about in the light of recent events that are going on in 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet and other parts of the Fleet operating around the globe, are there currently any efforts in action to combat the casualties we have been suffering? If so, is there anything that we at the more junior levels can do to help in these efforts?

And I've got to tell you, first of all, you know, shipmate, what a great mindset to have. You first look at these things and you own it and you go, what can we do?

The first thing I would say is you know, we talk about being a learning organization and that starts with each and every one of us. We have to learn every day. We continue to educate ourselves, we continue to hone our skills, we focus on those watch station qualifications, we mature our skill sets, we develop every day.

And the other piece of this that I think that everybody can do is, we're all leaders out there. In every part of our organization. And we need people to continuously be those leaders and identify those things that we can continue to improve upon, and challenge leadership with those things, and then kind of hold each other accountable to that stuff.

So great question that came in. There's a lot of things that we can do. Keep focused on maturing those skill sets out there, focusing on developing our competencies and our operations and warfighting effectiveness, and be leaders across the entire organization.

**Admiral Richardson:** And I would just add onto that. First of all, this idea of ownership is a real powerful one. We just need to own our jobs, be experts in what we do, hold ourselves to those standards, challenge our leadership to understand and to get better as well.

That's exactly the mindset behind this Operational Pause that we ordered. We're going to just stop for a second and we're going to make sure that we've got the fundamentals straight. Right? We're going to try to remove any kind of distractions from our day on that particular day and make sure that we do have ownership of our jobs, particularly in the sort of fundamental blocking and tackling, the elements of safety and the basics. You've heard that term, brilliant in the basics. This is the day to concentrate on those things to make sure that we're doing everything we can to be as brilliant in there as we can.

Okay. A follow-on question, and again, a nice segue. With the current status of ships in Japan, are there going to be any homeport shifts happening in the near future? And along those lines, what is the state of Navy manning, especially in our surface fleet where we see our ships being manned to their original manning size. And that's from Chief [Echevarri], also kind of echoed by Petty Officers [Standeway] and Overton.

Let me tell you how this works. We are constantly looking around the world and we compare it to our Navy to figure out what is the best place to homeport or forward deploy our ships? That will continue to be the case. It's very responsive to the strategic needs of the Navy and the nation. Where can we best exercise our mission? And that's a process called the Strategic Laydown Process that we'll continue to assess that environment and make changes as we go.

When we do those changes we owe it to you to make sure that the manning piece is there, that the maintenance capability is there so that when a ship moves from one homeport to the next it is fully supported from manning and infrastructure and a maintenance standpoint. So we'll get out in front of that as far as we can. We'll make sure that anybody who may be involved in a homeport shift is well informed, their families are taken care of, and we'll proceed from there.

But nothing out of the ordinary right now in terms of homeport shifts foreseen on the horizon, but we continue to assess, based on just changes in the strategic environment.

**MCPON Giordano:** We'll shift. We've got a great question that came in that kind of focused on a little bit of manning particular to the reserve community. Came in from STSCS Emory Rusty Brian. Appreciate you sending it over to us.



It says, can you speak to where your mind is with respect to reserve support and how we can help directly or indirectly during this time in need.

I'll tell you, we think about our Navy as one team, one total force.

**Admiral Richardson:** Absolutely.

**MCPON Giordano:** And the reserve community is embedded in all that. Around the globe, in a variety of different mission packages.

To answer the specifics to your question, you know, SURFOR and RESFOR, those teams are working hard, looking at opportunities for the reserve community to maybe fill some of those positions at sea, critical ratings, critical pay grades where they need leadership there. So those teams are working hard in that regard.

Also doing the same thing as we face all the challenges right now within the continental U.S. and the catastrophe in Houston, and where they're at with the joint base there, the joint reserve base there at Fort Worth. So reserve forces, you know, very much embedded in everything that we do.

**Admiral Richardson:** In fact when we do All Hands Calls, and sometimes there's a crowd of thousands, sometimes there's a couple of hundred. We always ask the question, hey, if you're a Navy reservist, raise your hand. We always get a fair amount of hands that go up in the team. That's the only way you can tell us apart. Right? I mean we truly are one team. We're working shoulder to shoulder.

And the reserves are also super responsive, so just like with Hurricane Harvey, they're up and at them, moving towards the sound of that gunfire down there, the problem, so that we can do everything we can to help the folks down in Texas.

I've got a different type of question here, and it's one that's near and dear to my heart so I'm really happy to answer. This comes from Chief Navy Diver Macomas. The essence of his question is about distractions and layering on requirements. So he phrases it, hey, sir, how come every time there's an accident in the Navy the solution seems to be some new or reinforced administrative procedure. And he lists a whole bunch of them. And it says hey, the biggest, he believes the biggest reason for

all our problems is that we may not be keeping our eye on becoming the professionals at our job that we need to be.

MCPON and I couldn't agree more that there's a lot of distractions out there, a lot of these administrative programs that don't contribute to the warfighting and operational excellence in our Navy. So we have been on a campaign to knock those down. We started with collateral duties. We took a bunch of those off the plate. MCPON stood up a team that is assessing even more. I think we're pretty close to announcing the second tranche of collateral duties that we'll eliminate.

If you see an administrative program out there that you don't think is contributing to warfighting excellence, operational excellence, you let your chain of command know and let me know. Just send it directly to us. We will take a close look at it, evaluate it, and if we can knock it out and eliminate it, we will. But we need to get back to owning our jobs, concentrating on the operational excellence piece of what our Navy's about, and reducing these administrative distractions that just pull us away from that. So great question.

We had a lot of people ask that. Chief Fisher, Lieutenant Bennett, Chief Griffin, and Mr. Snow as well. So lots of folks interested in how can we get back to the fundamental principles of warfighting excellence and remove these other distractions.

**MCPON Giordano:** I think that those distractions tie into this next question that we got. This question came from a number of parents out there. A number of moms, a number of dads, because they're paying attention. They're seeing what's happening out there. I just want to share this one with you that came into us from a mother. And Jamie, we appreciate you sending this over to us.

And as a father myself, it hits both of us hard. We're both parents as well.

**Admiral Richardson:** In fact I have a child in the Navy. So we understand exactly where you're coming from on this.

**MCPON Giordano:** Jamie wrote, my son, he's going to be enlisting very soon. He's excited about becoming a U.S. Navy sailor and serving the country with honor in the nuclear program. It's heartbreaking to hear that those in command have not provided adequate training or have been derelict in their duties, thereby costing others their lives. When my son enlists in a couple of

months I will give him over to the Navy. Both he and I will entrust his life to the wisdom of his commanding officers and the training he is provided. Going forward, how will you work to better ensure our sailors' safety? It is one thing to lose a son in battle. It's another completely to lose them in peacetime.

I will tell you that safety is in the forefront of everything that we think about. We drill, we educate, we train, consistent in every warfare community for the known and the unknown. And we do that so that our sailors out there know how to respond without even thinking about it sometimes. You know, you train to replicate, and that replication kicks in at those times when you need it the most. But we will always be focused on the safety of our sailors.

But we live in a tough environment. Being a U.S. Navy sailor is not necessarily for everybody. We're going to take care of our sons and daughters, our U.S. Navy sailors, but we're going to ask them to operate in some tough environments sometimes. But please know that we do, we, you know, we work hard every day to make sure they are effectively trained, educated, and conducting business out there in safe environments to respond to those situations, and we'll continue to invest in that regard.

**Admiral Richardson:** That's our first prime directive, if you will, to make sure that our training is preparing us properly to operate in these risky environments, to minimize that risk as much as possible.

As I said, you know, we're parents. My son's in the Navy. I know exactly what you're talking about. And we're going to, we are committed to continuing to train our sailors to operate safely, effectively, and to continue to learn. So we've got a commitment that we're going to cover down on that so that we're worthy of bringing your sons and daughters into the Navy and giving them a fulfilling career and a safe career. Okay?

I want to, I think we're coming to the end of our time and so I want to cover a couple of topics and then MCPON and I will just wrap up.

There is a bit of a thread out there, a thread of conversation, that there might be some kind of a cyber attack or cyber intrusion that is involved in these collisions. I'll tell you that we've given that an amazing amount of attention. It is sort of a reality of our current situation that part of any kind

of investigation or inspection is going to have to take a look at the computer, the cyber, the information warfare aspects of our business. We're doing that with these inspections as well. But to date, the inspections we've done show that there's no evidence of any kind of a cyber intrusion. We'll continue to look deeper and deeper, but I just want to assure you that to date, there's been nothing that we've found to point to that.

There's also a number of folks that are wondering hey, what about Hurricane Harvey? What are we doing down there as a Navy to get after that?

I'll tell you that we're involved. We've got two helicopter squadrons down there that are just working like crazy. The Dusty Dogs of HSC 7, and the Ghost Riders of HSC 28, and together those two teams have put together more than 220 rescues in the path and the wake of Hurricane Harvey, and they're continuing to work at it.

In addition, we have P8s from Jacksonville flying to provide overwatch and surveillance of the situation so that we can understand this crisis as it unfolds as best as possible. Those teams are from VP45.

And then we've got the USS Kearsarge and the USS Oak Hill, I think with the 2/6<sup>th</sup> MEU loading out today, and they are standing ready to get underway and go down there to provide continuing support and relief to the millions of people that have been affected by this just unbelievable record-setting storm of Hurricane Harvey.

So our hearts and minds are with everybody who's suffering by virtue of this hurricane. The Navy's flowing assistance to the crisis and we'll stay there as long as it takes to alleviate that suffering down there in Texas, and now moving over to Louisiana and other places.

Listen, we're going to close out because we're at the end of our time. Let us know how we did. Alright? It's our first time on Facebook Live. We're rookies at this, but it might be something that we do more often. Just to continue this conversation that the MCPON talked about, if this is effective in terms of getting the message to you, we can think about doing this more often.

I appreciate all of the questions that you sent in. We kind of grouped them together into some major topics. And as I said,

we'll get to all the ones we didn't answer by email or something like that.

Listen, keep on doing the great work that you're doing out there. Own your job. Be professionals. Know the requirements of your job. Be safe. Be brilliant in the basics. And we'll continue to be the strongest Navy on the water. Okay?

Let's get to it.

# # # #



# CNO's Sailing Directions

## MISSION

### Our core responsibilities

Deter aggression and, if deterrence fails, win our Nation's wars. Employ the global reach and persistent presence of forward-stationed and rotational forces to secure the Nation from direct attack, assure Joint operational access and retain global freedom of action. With global partners, protect the maritime freedom that is the basis for global prosperity. Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with an expanding set of allies and international partners to enhance global security.

## PRIORITIES

### The enduring responsibilities of each CNO


- ◆ Remain ready to meet current challenges, today
- ◆ Build a relevant and capable future force
- ◆ Enable and support our Sailors, Navy Civilians and their Families

## VISION

### Navy's contribution and characteristics over the next 10-15 years

**The U.S. Navy will remain critical to our national security and our economic prosperity.**

- ◆ The Navy will continue to be at the front line of our nation's efforts in war and peace with a proud heritage of success in battle on, above, and below the sea.
- ◆ The Navy will continue protecting the interconnected systems of trade, information, and security that underpin American prosperity.



**Operating forward across the globe, the Navy will provide the nation offshore options to win today and advance our interests in an era of uncertainty.**

- ◆ We will deliver credible capability for deterrence, sea control, and power projection to deter or contain conflict and fight and win wars.
- ◆ As ground forces draw down in the Middle East, the Navy will continue to deter aggression and reassure our partners – we will have the watch.

**Ready Sailors and Civilians will remain the source of the Navy's warfighting capability.**

- ◆ Our people will be diverse in experience, background and ideas; personally and professionally ready; and proficient in the operation of their weapons and systems.
- ◆ Our Sailors and Civilians will continue a two-century tradition of warfighting excellence, adaptation, and resilience.
- ◆ Our character and our actions will remain guided by our commitment to the nation and to each other as part of one Navy team.

**We will address economic change by being effective and efficient. We will innovate to:**

- ◆ Use new technologies and operating concepts to sharpen our warfighting advantage against evolving threats;
- ◆ Operate forward at strategic maritime crossroads;
- ◆ Sustain our fleet capability through effective maintenance, timely modernization, and sustained production of proven ships and aircraft;
- ◆ Provide our Sailors confidence in their equipment and in their own skills.

**Over the next 10 to 15 years, the Navy will evolve and remain the preeminent maritime force.**

- ◆ The reach and effectiveness of ships and aircraft will be greatly expanded through new and updated weapons, unmanned systems, sensors, and increased power.
- ◆ The Air-Sea Battle concept will be implemented to sustain U.S. freedom of action and Joint Assured Access.
- ◆ Unmanned systems in the air and water will employ greater autonomy and be fully integrated with their manned counterparts.
- ◆ The Navy will continue to dominate the undersea domain using a network of sensors and platforms - with expanded reach and persistence from unmanned autonomous systems.
- ◆ Cyberspace will be operationalized with capabilities that span the electromagnetic spectrum – providing superior awareness and control when and where we need it.

# TENETS

**Warfighting First**

**Operate Forward**

**Be Ready**

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Our forces will operate forward in new and flexible ways with access to strategic maritime crossroads.**

- ◆ Our posture will be focused and improved using a combination of rotational deployments, forward bases, temporary and austere facilities and partner nation ports.
- ◆ Our forward presence will build on and strengthen our partnerships and alliances where sea lanes, resources, and vital U.S. interests intersect.

**The key considerations we should apply to every decision**

Be ready to fight and win today, while building the ability to win tomorrow

Provide offshore options to deter, influence and win in an era of uncertainty

Harness the teamwork, talent and imagination of our diverse force to be ready to fight and responsibly employ our resources

**The starting point for developing and executing our plans**

- ◆ Our primary mission is warfighting. All our efforts to improve capabilities, develop people, and structure our organizations should be grounded in this fundamental responsibility.
- ◆ People are the Navy's foundation. We have a professional and moral obligation to uphold a covenant with Sailors, Civilians and their families – to ably lead, equip, train and motivate.
- ◆ Our approach should be Joint and combined when possible. However, we own the sea, and must also be able to operate independently when necessary.
- ◆ Our primary Joint partner is the U.S. Marine Corps. We must continue to evolve how we will operate and fight as expeditionary warfare partners.
- ◆ At sea and ashore, we must be ready to part with Navy roles, programs and traditions if they are not integral to our future vision or a core element of our mission.
- ◆ We must ensure today's force is ready for its assigned missions. Maintaining ships and aircraft to their expected service lives is an essential contribution to fleet capacity.
- ◆ Our Navy Ethos defines us and describes the standard for character and behavior.
- ◆ We must clearly and directly communicate our intent and expectations both within and outside the Navy.
- ◆ I believe in the "Charge of Command." We will train and empower our leaders with authorities commensurate with their responsibilities.



# A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority



Version 1.0  
January 2016



Enclosure K  
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## **Mission**

The United States Navy will be ready to conduct prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea. Our Navy will protect America from attack and preserve America's strategic influence in key regions of the world. U.S. naval forces and operations – from the sea floor to space, from deep water to the littorals, and in the information domain – will deter aggression and enable peaceful resolution of crises on terms acceptable to the United States and our allies and partners. If deterrence fails, the Navy will conduct decisive combat operations to defeat any enemy.

## **Introduction**

For 240 years, the U.S. Navy has been a cornerstone of American security and prosperity. To continue to meet this obligation, we must adapt to the emerging security environment. The initiatives laid out in this Design represent initial steps along a future course to achieve the aims articulated in the Revised Cooperative Strategy for the 21st Century (CS-21R) in this new environment. It's a tremendously complex challenge. As we get underway, we must first understand our history - how we got to where we are. Moving forward, we'll respect that we won't get it all right, and so we'll monitor and assess ourselves and our surroundings as we go. We'll learn and adapt, always getting better, striving to the limits of performance. This cannot be a "top-down" effort; everybody must contribute.



## **Strategic Environment**

On the eve of the 20th century, the United States emerged from the Civil War and laid the foundation to become a global power, but its course to continued prosperity was unclear. Navy Capt. Alfred Thayer Mahan helped to chart that course, arguing that American growth required access to overseas markets, which in turn required a preeminent navy to protect that access. America became a nation with global interests, and the seas were the path to new frontiers.

The essence of Mahan's vision still pertains: America's interests lie beyond our own shores. What was true in the late 19th century holds true today – America's success depends on our creativity, our entrepreneurship, and our access and relationships abroad. In an increasingly globalized world, America's success is even more reliant on the U.S. Navy.

In fulfilling our mission, it's important to start with an assessment of the security environment. It is tempting to define the challenge solely in terms of our allies, partners, and competitors – the state and non-state actors on the world stage. While these are critical, it is even more important to understand the dramatic changes that have taken place on the stage itself – the character of the environment in which competition and cooperation occur. Fundamentally, the world has become dramatically more globalized, and this trend is accelerating. Our way ahead must account for this new reality. In particular, this Design will address three major and interrelated global forces that are increasingly used, increasingly stressed, increasingly important, and increasingly contested. These three forces energize the quickly changing environment in which the Navy must operate, and if required, fight and win.

The first global force is the traffic on the oceans, seas, and waterways, including the sea floor – the classic maritime system. For millennia, the seas have served to connect people and societies to help them prosper. As the global economy continues to expand and become more connected, the maritime system is becoming increasingly used by the United States and the world as a whole. Shipping traffic over traditional sea lanes is increasing, new trade routes are opening in the Arctic, and new technologies are making undersea resources more accessible. This maritime traffic also includes mass and uncontrolled migration and illicit shipment of material and people. The maritime system is becoming more heavily used, more stressed, and more contested than ever before.

A second increasingly influential force is the rise of the global information system – the information that rides on the servers, undersea cables, satellites, and wireless networks that increasingly envelop and connect the globe. Newer than the maritime system, the information system is more pervasive, enabling an even greater multitude of connections between people and at a much lower cost of entry – literally an individual with a computer is a powerful actor in this system! Information, now passed in near-real time across links that continue to multiply, is in turn driving an accelerating rate of change – from music to medicine, from microfinance to missiles.

The third interrelated force is the increasing rate of technological creation and adoption. This is not just in information technologies, where Gordon Moore's projections of exponential advances in processing, storage, and switches continue to be realized. Scientists are also unlocking new properties of commonplace materials and creating new materials altogether at astonishing speeds. Novel uses for increasingly sophisticated robotics, energy storage, 3-D printing, and networks of low-cost sensors, to name just a few examples, are changing almost every facet of how we work and live. Genetic science is just beginning to demonstrate its power. Artificial intelligence is just getting started and could fundamentally reshape the environment. And as technology is introduced at an accelerating rate, it is being adopted by society just as fast – people are using these new tools as quickly as they are introduced, and in new and novel ways.

These three forces – the forces at play in the maritime system, the force of the information system, and the force of technology entering the environment – and the interplay between them have profound implications for the United States Navy. We must do everything we can to seize the potential afforded by this environment. Our competitors are moving quickly, and our adversaries are bent on leaving us swirling in their wake.

And the competitors themselves have changed. For the first time in 25 years, the United States is facing a return to great power competition. Russia and China both have advanced their military capabilities to act as global powers. Their goals are backed by a growing arsenal of high-end warfighting capabilities, many of which are focused specifically on our vulnerabilities and are increasingly designed from the ground up to leverage the maritime, technological and information systems. They continue to develop and field information-enabled weapons, both kinetic and non-kinetic, with increasing range, precision and destructive capacity. Both China and Russia are also engaging in coercion and competition below the traditional thresholds of high-end conflict, but nonetheless exploit the weakness of accepted norms in space, cyber and the electromagnetic spectrum. The Russian Navy is operating with a frequency and in areas not seen for almost two decades, and the Chinese PLA(N) is extending its reach around the world.

Russia and China are not the only actors seeking to gain advantages in the emerging security environment in ways that threaten U.S. and global interests. Others are now pursuing advanced technology, including military technologies that were once the exclusive province of great powers – this trend will only continue. Coupled with a continued dedication to furthering its nuclear weapons and missile programs, North Korea's provocative actions continue to threaten security in North Asia and beyond. And while the recent international agreement with Iran is intended to curb its nuclear ambitions, Tehran's advanced missiles, proxy forces and other conventional capabilities continue to pose threats to which the Navy must remain prepared to respond. Finally, international terrorist groups have proven their resilience and adaptability and now pose a long-term threat to stability and security around the world. All of these actors seek to exploit all three forces described above – the speed, precision and reach that

the maritime and information systems now enable, bolstered by new technologies – to counter U.S. military advantages and to threaten the rules and norms that have been the basis of prosperity and world order for the last 70 years.

There is also a fourth ‘force’ that shapes our security environment. Barring an unforeseen change, even as we face new challenges and an increasing pace, the Defense and Navy budgets likely will continue to be under pressure. We will not be able to “buy” our way out of the challenges that we face. The budget environment will force tough choices but must also inspire new thinking.

Looking forward, it is clear that the challenges the Navy faces are shifting in character, are increasingly difficult to address in isolation, and are changing more quickly. This will require us to reexamine our approaches in every aspect of our operations. But as we change in many areas, it is important to remember that there will also be constants. The nature of war has always been, and will remain, a violent human contest between thinking and adapting adversaries for political gain. Given this fundamental truth, the lessons of the masters – Thucydides, Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mao, Corbett, and, yes, Mahan – still apply. America’s importance to the world holds fast. Our nation’s reliance on its Navy – our Navy – continues to grow.

### **Why a “Design?”**

The scope and complexity of the challenges we face demand a different approach than that offered by a classic campaign plan. This guidance frames the problem and a way forward while acknowledging that there is inherent and fundamental uncertainty in both the problem definition and the proposed solution.

Accordingly, we will make our best initial assessment of the environment, formulate a way ahead, and move out. But as we move, we will continually assess the environment, to ensure that it responds in a way that is consistent with achieving our goals. Where necessary, we will make adjustments, challenging ourselves to approach the limits of performance.

This Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority will guide our behaviors and investments, both this year and in the years to come. More specific details about programs and funding adjustments will be reflected in our annual budget documents.



## Core Attributes

One clear implication of the current environment is the need for the Navy to prepare for decentralized operations, guided by commander's intent. The ability to achieve this end is reliant on the trust and confidence that is based on a clear understanding, among peers and between commanders and subordinates, of the risk that can be tolerated. This trust and confidence is enhanced by our actions, which must reflect our core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. Four core attributes of our professional identity will help to serve as guiding criteria for our decisions and actions. If we abide by these attributes, our values should be clearly evident in our actions.

- **INTEGRITY:** Our behaviors as individuals and as an organization align with our values as a profession. We actively strengthen each other's resolve to act consistently with our values. As individuals, as teams, and as a Navy, our conduct must always be upright and honorable both in public and when nobody's looking.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** We are a mission-focused force. We achieve and maintain high standards. Our actions support our strategy. We clearly define the problem we're trying to solve and the proposed outcomes. In execution, we honestly assess our progress and adjust as required – we are our own toughest critic.
- **INITIATIVE:** On their own, everybody strives to be the best they can be – we give 100% when on the job. Our leaders take ownership and act to the limit of their authorities. We foster a questioning attitude and look at new ideas with an open mind. Our most junior teammate may have the best idea; we must be open to capturing that idea.
- **TOUGHNESS:** We can take a hit and keep going, tapping all sources of strength and resilience: rigorous training for operations and combat, the fighting spirit of our people, and the steadfast support of our families. We don't give up the ship.



## **Four Lines of Effort**

The execution of this Design is built along four Lines of Effort that focus on warfighting, learning faster, strengthening our Navy team, and building partnerships. These lines of effort are inextricably linked and must be considered together to get a sense of the total effort. The corresponding objectives and first year tasks listed under each line of effort define how we will begin to move forward.

**STRENGTHEN NAVAL POWER AT AND FROM SEA:** Maintain a fleet that is trained and ready to operate and fight decisively – from the deep ocean to the littorals, from the sea floor to space, and in the information domain. Align our organization to best support generating operational excellence.

1. Maintain and modernize the undersea leg of the strategic deterrent triad. This is foundational to our survival as a nation.
2. In partnership with the Marine Corps, develop concepts and capabilities to provide more options to national leaders, from non-conflict competition to high-end combat at sea. Operations short of conflict should be designed to contain and control escalation on terms favorable to the U.S. Combat at sea must address “blue-water” scenarios far from land and power projection ashore in a highly “informationalized” and contested environment. All scenarios must address the threat of long-range precision strike. Test and refine concepts through focused wargaming, modeling, and simulations. Validate these concepts through fleet exercises, unit training and certification.
3. Further advance and ingrain information warfare. Expand the Electromagnetic Maneuver Warfare concept to encompass all of information warfare, to include space and cyberspace.
4. To better meet today’s force demands, explore alternative fleet designs, including kinetic and non-kinetic payloads and both manned and unmanned systems. This effort will include exploring new naval platforms and formations – again in a highly “informationalized” environment – to meet combatant commander needs.
5. Examine the organization of United States Fleet Forces Command, Commander Pacific Fleet and their subordinate commands to better support clearly defining operational and warfighting demands and then to generate ready forces to meet those demands.
6. Examine OPNAV organization to rationalize our headquarters in support of warfighting requirements.



**ACHIEVE HIGH VELOCITY LEARNING AT EVERY LEVEL:** Apply the best concepts, techniques and technologies to accelerate learning as individuals, teams and organizations. Clearly know the objective and the theoretical limits of performance – set aspirational goals. Begin problem definition by studying history – do not relearn old lessons. Start by seeing what you can accomplish without additional resources. During execution, conduct routine and rigorous self-assessment. Adapt processes to be inherently receptive to innovation and creativity.

1. Implement individual, team and organizational best practices to inculcate high velocity learning as a matter of routine.
2. Expand the use of learning-centered technologies, simulators, online gaming, analytics and other tools as a means to bring in creativity, operational agility and insight.
3. Optimize the Navy intellectual enterprise to maximize combat effectiveness and efficiency. Reinvigorate an assessment culture and processes.
4. Understand the lessons of history so as not to relearn them.

**STRENGTHEN OUR NAVY TEAM FOR THE FUTURE:** We are one Navy Team – comprised of a diverse mix of active duty and reserve Sailors, Navy Civilians, and our families – with a history of service, sacrifice and success. We will build on this history to create a climate of operational excellence that will keep us ready to prevail in all future challenges.

1. Aggressively pursue implementation of the core tenets of the “Sailor 2025” program – fully integrated and transparent data and analytics, increased career choice and flexibility, expanded family support, and tailored learning.
2. Accelerate “Sailor 2025” efforts to leverage information technology to enhance personnel system and training modernization efforts.
3. Strengthen and broaden leadership development programs to renew and reinforce the Navy Team’s dedication to the naval profession. Leader development will be fleet-centered and will begin early in our careers, focusing on character and commitment to Navy core values. Character and leadership will be rewarded through challenging assignments and advancement.
4. Strengthen organizational integrity by balancing administrative requirements with the benefits gained from the time spent. The goal will be to return more time to leaders and empower them to develop their teams.
5. Strengthen the role of Navy leaders in leading and managing civilian professionals as key contributors to the mission effectiveness of our Navy Team.



**EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN OUR NETWORK OF PARTNERS:** Deepen operational relationships with other services, agencies, industry, allies and partners – who operate with the Navy to support our shared interests.

1. Enhance integration with our Joint Service and interagency partners at all levels of interaction to include current and future planning, concept and capability development and assessment.
2. Prioritize key international partnerships through information sharing, interoperability initiatives, and combined operations; explore new opportunities for combined forward operations.
3. Deepen the dialogue with private research and development labs, and academia. Ensure that our Navy labs and research centers are competitive and fully engaged with their private-sector partners.
4. Increase the volume and range of interaction with commercial industry. Seek opportunities through non-traditional partners.

### **Desired Outcome**

A Naval Force that produces leaders and teams who learn and adapt to achieve maximum possible performance, and who achieve and maintain high standards to be ready for decisive operations and combat.

### **Conclusion**

We will remain the world's finest Navy **only** if we all fight each and every minute to get better. Our competitors are focused on taking the lead – we must pick up the pace and deny them. The margins of victory are razor thin – but decisive! I am counting on your integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness to execute the lines of effort described in this Design, execute our mission, and achieve our end state. I am honored and proud to lead you.



JOHN M. RICHARDSON







1 because we get four times the presence with those forces than we would if  
2 we had them all in CONUS. So, for example, the fact that we have got one  
3 carrier in Yokosuka, it actually gives us an equal -- roughly equal to 16  
4 carriers when we only operate 10. That is a big difference. Having four  
5 destroyers in Rota, Spain, operating off of BMD stations was the principal  
6 reason we wanted to put those forces forward was to get more out of those  
7 ships and not have to rotate as many from CONUS to do those missions.

8 So all of these things culminate with this notion that we aren't big  
9 enough to do everything we are being tasked to do. And our culture is we  
10 are going to get it done because that is what the Navy is all about. And  
11 sometimes our culture works against us. And I think we ask the sailors to  
12 do an awful lot, to your earlier point, and perhaps we have asked them to  
13 do too much, and that is what the comprehensive review will look at.

14 Ms. Bordallo. Thank you.

15 I have just one quick final question for any one of you who want to  
16 answer. Would you say that sequestration might have had something to do  
17 with the lack of maintenance and the training and so forth, funding not  
18 being there?

19 Admiral Moran. I am on record, ma'am, that that is absolutely the  
20 case. That along with nine consecutive continuing resolutions, and we are  
21 about to hit another one. Those budget uncertainties drive uncertainty  
22 into schedules, drive uncertainty into maintenance. Our private yards, our  
23 public yards, this is an issue across the board. So the most useful thing  
24 we could have out of Congress right now in terms of addressing a lot of our  
25 readiness concerns is stability in the budget.

1 flag officers. They take a team to the site to where the collision  
2 occurred or where the -- in this case, both ships were brought back to  
3 appear -- one in Singapore, one in Yokosuka. And they go through every  
4 aspect of an investigation. There is a checklist of things you do. We  
5 added cyber to that checklist because of obvious concerns with the fact  
6 that everything we operate has a cyber component to it -- networks, gear,  
7 radios. Everything. And so we want to make sure we understand that that  
8 is not -- we want to eliminate that as a potential causal factor to a  
9 mishap.

10 Those investigations can take a week, 2, 3 weeks. And a report is  
11 then passed to the convening authority. The investigation is not complete  
12 at that point. That convening authority then gets to endorse the report,  
13 ask additional questions, go review the following things -- I am not  
14 satisfied with X, Y, or Z. And then the investigating officer has to go  
15 back, look at those things, and provide an addendum to the report.

16 And then when commander of the 7th Fleet is complete with his  
17 endorsement, it gets passed to PAC Fleet. And in the case of Fitzgerald,  
18 that is where the current report and investigation reside with Admiral  
19 Swift. He then has a responsibility to look at the report for completeness  
20 and any findings of fact that he is unsatisfied with and wants further  
21 investigation. He can direct it in that endorsement.

22 Ultimately, it comes to me, both of those investigations. So a lot  
23 of people think that once the investigating officer submitted a report, the  
24 investigation's done, we should share that information. But I appreciate  
25 the opportunity to explain that the endorsement process is still part of

## **Congress grills Navy on ship collisions**

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**Section:** POLITICS

**Length:** 1032 words

**Byline:** By Jeremy Herb and Barbara Starr, CNN

### **Body**

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Senior **Navy** officials told a congressional panel Thursday they are examining everything from a lack of training to taxingly long deployments to congressional budget headaches in order to get to the bottom of a spate of deadly ship collisions in the Pacific.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Bill Moran and **Navy** director of surface warfare Rear Adm. Ronald Boxall testified on Thursday before two House armed services subcommittees on the USS John S. McCain and USS Fitzgerald collisions, which claimed the lives of 17 sailors and led to the dismissal of the 7th Fleet commander.

"We are shocked by these recent events," Moran said. "No matter how tough our operating environment, or how strained our budget, we shouldn't be and cannot be colliding with other ships and running aground. That is not about resourcing; it is about safety and it is about leadership at sea."

The two destroyer collisions, along with two cruiser accidents in the Pacific earlier this year, have prompted major questions inside the **Navy** about the health of its fleet.

Moran testified that the collisions themselves are under investigation with several reviews -- investigating the collisions as well as the **Navy's** deployment schedules and other factors -- but he acknowledged the **Navy** has dealt with growing demands and a shrinking fleet.

"We continue to have a supply and demand problem which is placing a heavy strain on the force," he said.

"All of these things culminate with this notion we aren't big enough to do everything we're being tasked to do," Moran added. "And our culture is, 'we're going to get it done,' because that's what the **Navy** is all about. And sometimes our culture works against us."

The **Navy** vice chief also acknowledged that he incorrectly assumed that the forces which deployed the most would also be the best trained.

"I personally made the assumption -- and I have made the assumption for many, many years -- that our forward-deployed naval forces in Japan was most efficient, well-trained, most experienced force we had because they were operating all the time," Moran said. "I made the assumption. It was a wrong assumption in hindsight."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson sent a memo to his team on Wednesday that said he was postponing the **Navy's** 3-4 star symposium planned for this month.

## Congress grills Navy on ship collisions

"Instead of coming to Washington DC, look for places where these tearing down forces may have eroded your standard," Richardson wrote in the memo, which was obtained by CNN.

"Each of us should have some 'red lines' -- a point beyond which we cannot go and still be safe and effective. If we can't meet that standard, we don't go until we can," Richardson wrote.

A senior Navy official told CNN that Richardson may not have been aware of all the deficiencies at the time of the failed training certifications.

In addition to the Navy's overall pace of operations, the hearing focused on ships that are based overseas. The Government Accountability Office has raised concerns for years about training and maintenance issues for overseas ships.

Ahead of Thursday's hearing, GAO found that more than one-third of training certifications for the Navy's cruisers and destroyers based in Japan had expired in June -- a fivefold increase from 2015, according to GAO's testimony to the committee, which CNN first reported.

Moran responded that when certifications expired, a ship's commanding officer still had to get a waiver with a plan approved to lower risk. But he acknowledged the rate of waivers needed was "alarming."

The expired training certifications were just one of several issues involving maintenance and training for ships based abroad outlined by GAO's John Pendleton, who also testified Thursday.

He said the Navy had pledged to address the lack of dedicated training time for ships based overseas back in 2015, but the service has yet to do so.

Lawmakers delved into a number of potential issues surrounding the collisions, from lack of training to length of deployment and even the prospect that a cyber attack could have played a role, which Moran says has not materialized.

"The material condition and the operational readiness of the ships are significantly degraded and not acceptable," said Rep. Rob Wittman of Virginia, chairman of the House armed services seapower subcommittee. "Of our large surface combatants, the majority of the forward-deployed ships are not properly ready to perform their primary warfare areas."

Connecticut Rep. Joe Courtney, the top Democrat on the subpanel, asked whether there was also a leadership issue, and whether anyone was willing to say "no" when a ship wasn't ready.

"Ultimately we're trying to figure out who decides, when you have the certification issues that Mr. Pendleton described, who calls time out and just says no?" Courtney asked. "When does it reach the point and where does it reach the point where someone says that's just not going to be deployed because it's not safe and it's not ready?"

Congress' role was also a frequent topic of discussion, with the Navy officials and lawmakers themselves blaming Congress for failing to deliver timely budgets that hampered planning for ship maintenance and modernization.

"Back in February, I cited funding reductions and consistent uncertainty about Congressional budget approvals as especially damaging, as they prevent us from taking steps to mitigate the burden on ships and sailors imposed by the high operational demand," Moran said.

He got agreement from House armed services chairman Mac Thornberry, who has long complained about defense budgets being subject to lengthy continuing resolutions and the Budget Control Act.

Thornberry told Moran not to hesitate to continue to call out the budget problems Congress is highlighting, but he also faulted Pentagon leaders during the Obama administration.

## Congress grills Navy on ship collisions

"The leadership of the department in the last administration denied we had a readiness problem. They said we were just making it up," Thornberry said.

Thursday's hearing is likely the first in a series on the issue. Sen. Roger Wicker, the chairman of the Senate's seapower subcommittee, told CNN he's likely to hold a hearing after the Navy completes its investigation into the collisions.

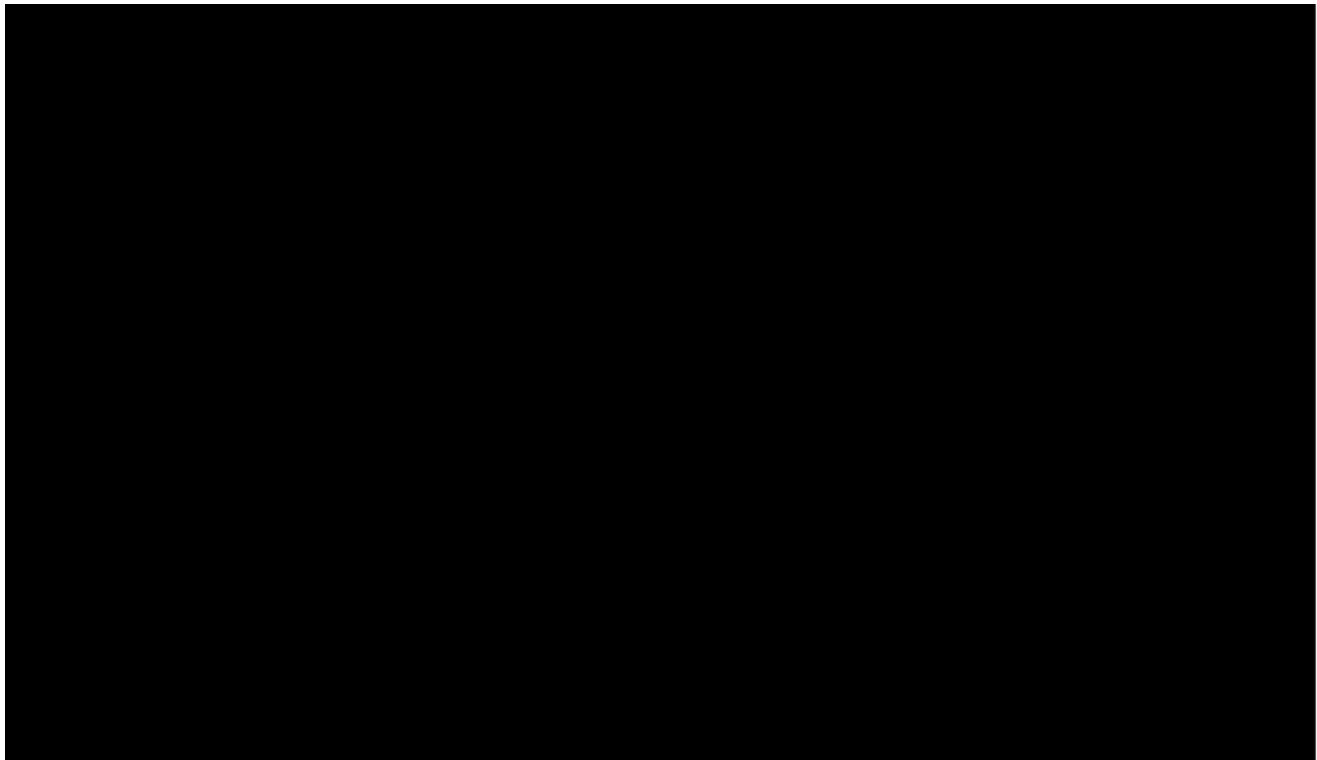
**Load-Date:** September 8, 2017

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# Navy gets grilled by House committee regarding deadly collisions



Trump pick Richard V. Spencer tours Camp Pendleton on Wednesday after bustling Tuesday with Navy.



By **Jeanette Steele**

SEPTEMBER 7, 2017, 12:40 PM

**C**ongressional members are painting a picture of a [U.S. Navy](#) out of whack in Asia, just as security tensions there are high.

Two subcommittees of the House Armed Services committee held a hearing Thursday to grill Navy officials about a string of recent mishaps that killed 17 sailors and gravely damaged two U.S. warships.

Enclosure O

Page 4 of 7



An early theme that emerged is that ships stationed outside the continental United States for too long are not getting the attention they need.

"Forward-deployed ships suffer as the Navy prioritizes operational deployments over maintenance and modernization," said Rep. [Rob Wittman](#), a Republican from Virginia and chairman of the seapower subcommittee. "This maintenance and training model places sailors at risk and clearly contributed to the incidents that we witnessed in Seventh Fleet."

Adm. Bill Moran outlined one reason that may have happened: The Navy gets more bang for its buck from ships stationed closer to the high-tension areas. The Navy gets four times the "presence" from forward-deployed ships, such as those in Asia, because time isn't spent sailing to and from the United States, Moran said.

The four-star admiral said the pressure on that kind of ship and ship crew may have risen too high.

"Our culture is, 'We're going to get it done,' because that's what the Navy is all about. And sometimes our culture works against us," Moran, the vice chief of naval operations, told the committee. "Perhaps we've asked them to do too much."

The hearing was preceded by a report from a government watchdog agency finding that U.S. warships assigned to the busy Asia-Pacific command known as U.S. Seventh Fleet were way behind on training.

More than a third of the Navy's destroyers and cruisers stationed in Japan had warfare training certifications that were expired as of June, according to U.S. Government Accountability Office [analysis delivered at Thursday's hearing](#). Over two-thirds had been expired for five months or more.

These certifications matter because they show that a crew is up to date on the training required to operate the vessel.

The GAO also found that crew reductions contribute to sailors Navy-wide being overworked and to safety risks.

The Navy slimmed down crew sizes in the early 2000s — in part due to more automation on ships. But the changes were not supported by analysis and may now be creating safety risks, the watchdog agency said in testimony delivered by John [Pendleton](#), director of the GAO's defense capabilities and management unit.

For instance, some sailors on ships are working more than 100 hours per week.

In response to that finding, Rep. [Elizabeth Esty](#), D-Connecticut, said, “The notion that they are working 100-hour weeks is really terrifying, for them and for us.”

Esty, who isn't on the Armed Services committee but asked to testify because one of the fallen sailors is from her district, said the safety issue is comparable to doctors in training working too many hours in a row.

“I think that’s something you need to look at, the capacity for people to operate under pressure with those kinds of hours,” she said. “It’s simply unfair to them, it’s unsafe and it’s wrong.”

Also, the Navy has been chronically unable to get maintenance done on time so that ships are available for training.

The GAO says data shows that maintenance delays on 107 of 169 surface ships resulted in 6,603 lost operational days between 2011 and 2016. These problems come against the backdrop of the Navy wanting to increase its fleet to 355 ships from today’s 277 and to assign more ships to Asia.

Rep. [Duncan Hunter](#), R-Alpine, suggested officials might be casting too wide a net by scrutinizing ship assignments and maintenance schedules when looking for fixes for the ship mishaps.

“This wasn’t a complex (thing), like suppression of enemy air defense or something crazy like that. This was ships hitting other ships and running aground,” Hunter said at the hearing. “I think it’s easy to ... say there’s all these different problems, as opposed to not seeing a ship on a radar, or with your binoculars out the window. It’s almost easy to get too carried away and not be narrow enough on this.”

Up next, probably: More congressional hearings on the topic. Also, the Navy is working on several investigations that will shed more light on the collisions.

“We need to ask that those reports are open and available to people,” said Rep. [Susan Davis](#), D-San Diego, in an interview with The San Diego Union-Tribune after the hearing.

“I hope that our sailors have a chance to look at them. I want to be sure that all the way up the chain, our sailors who were working on the ships, that they have the ability to respond,” said Davis, a member of the committee.

### ***[Welcome to The Intel, a blog examining the hot military news of the day](#)***

The committee is looking at a string of U.S. military accidents that involve Navy, Marine Corps and Army aircraft and vessels and resulted in the deaths of 42 troops.

- June 17: Seven sailors — including two from San Diego County — were killed after then Japan-based destroyer Fitzgerald destroyer collided before dawn with a container ship.
- July 10: Sixteen troops were killed when a Marine Corps KC-130 plane crashed in Mississippi.
- August 5: Three Marines died when their MV-22 Osprey crashed while on final approach to the USS Green Bay off the coast of Australia.
- August 15: Five Army troops died when their UH-60 Black Hawk went down during a nighttime training exercises off Hawaii.
- August 21: Ten sailors died when the Japan-based destroyer John S. McCain collided with a Liberian chemical tanker.
- August 25: One soldier died when an Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed off Yemen's coast during a training exercise.

Additionally, the San Diego-based cruiser Lake Champlain was hit by a South Korean fishing boat while deployed in Asia in May. The cruiser did not suffer major damage. And in January, the Japan-based cruiser Antietam ran aground on shoals just outside its base in Yokosuka and spilled fluid into Tokyo Bay.

In response to the ship mishaps, the Navy on Aug. 21 ordered an “operational pause” for the entire fleet to revisit basic seamanship fundamentals. The Navy is also doing an investigation of the conditions in the Seventh Fleet, which is headquartered in Yokosuka, Japan.

Seventh Fleet commander, Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, was removed from his job as an expression of loss of confidence. It was a somewhat ceremonial gesture; Aucoin was already scheduled to retire a month later.

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**This article is related to:** [Asia](#), [U.S. Navy](#), [Duncan Hunter](#), [Susan Davis](#), [Elizabeth Esty](#), [Rob Wittman](#), [Camp Pendleton](#)

STATEMENT OF  
ADMIRAL JOHN M. RICHARDSON  
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
  
ON THE RECENT U.S. NAVY INCIDENTS AT SEA  
  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the recent U.S. Navy incidents at sea. To begin, I want to express my deep condolences to the families of the 17 Sailors who served their country with honor and distinction and lost their lives in USS FITZGERALD and USS JOHN S. MCCAIN. In both of these tragic incidents our Sailors acted heroically to save their ships as they combatted flooding and the loss of critical systems. Care and support to the families of these Sailors is our top priority. I have committed to them that we will learn everything we can from these tragic events to prevent another accident. We will always stand with these families.

What we do is inherently dangerous. It is a leadership responsibility to ensure we provide the right oversight and training to keep our team at their operational peak. We are taking immediate actions to prevent another mishap.

- I directed a pause across the Navy, both ashore and afloat, to review our fundamentals to ensure safe and effective operations, and to correct any areas that require immediate attention. This pause has been completed, with commanders incorporating deliberate processes in their operations to better manage risk.
- We have commenced Readiness for Sea Assessments (RFSA) for all ships assigned to Japan, to inspect and assess watchstander proficiency and material readiness to ensure ships are able to safely navigate, communicate and operate. Immediate remediation will be conducted for ships found deficient, and they will not be assigned for operational tasking until they are certified to be ready.

- We have taken measures to ensure our Sailors get sufficient sleep in all shipboard routines to address fatigue concerns.
- All material problems involving ship control have been given increased priority for repair.
- To ensure SEVENTH Fleet ships are properly certified, the Pacific Fleet Commander is standing up Naval Surface Group Western Pacific (NSGWP) to consolidate authorities to oversee the training and certification of forward-deployed ships based in Japan.
- We have commenced a review of certifications of each ship, to include developing a plan for each to regain currency and proficiency across all certification areas. All waivers for ships whose certification has expired will now be approved by the Pacific Fleet Commander.
- We have increased focus across the force on open communication and thorough debriefing and assessment of operations and evolutions through instilling the practice of “Plan, Brief, Execute, Debrief” across commands. Other cultural changes include increasing unit-level operational pauses, increasing access to lessons learned, and encouraging time for repercussion-free self-assessments.

In addition to these actions, the pause yielded results across all communities to promote a renewed focus on safety, communication and professionalism in the execution of “routine” operations. Leaders at every level addressed fighting against over-confidence, inattention, and complacency through emphasis on adherence to procedures and on applying sound operational risk management procedures. We will continue to enhance our safety culture in which each Sailor is empowered to act to control hazards before they become a mishap.

We are not stopping there. In addition to the investigations into the specific incidents on USS FITZGERALD and USS JOHN S. MCCAIN, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations directed a Comprehensive Review to examine for more systemic problems. Led by Admiral Phil Davidson, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, this effort will review individual training and professional development, to include seamanship, navigation, voyage planning, leader development and all aspects of tactical training. The review will also address unit level and operational performance, to include oversight and risk

management at all levels of the chain of command. The development and certification of deployed operational and mission standards – force generation – will be reviewed, with an emphasis on Forward Deployed Naval Forces. It will also include a review of the material readiness of our ships, and the systems required to operate them, to include navigation, propulsion, steering, combat systems and material availability. The review team includes experts from within the Navy and outside experts from other services, academia, and the civilian sector. This approach will help ensure we don't have any blind spots as we look hard at every aspect of our operations. We will be transparent with the results of these reviews and our actions.

I have testified several times about the “triple whammy” - the corrosive confluence of high operational tempo constrained funding levels, and budget uncertainty. Although warfighting capabilities of ships have dramatically increased in the last century, the size and scope of U.S. responsibilities around the world have also increased, and the Navy is feeling the strains of consistently high operational tempo. Added to this challenge, eight years of continuing resolutions and the Budget Control Act have impacted the ability to plan and schedule training, ship maintenance, and modernization. With the \$2.8B in funding approved in Fiscal Year 17, we are plugging the most urgent readiness holes in the fleet. Our Fiscal Year 18 request sustains the readiness progress, increases end strength, modernizes our current platforms, and purchases future platforms and capabilities needed to sustain the advantage over our adversaries. While we have prioritized our maintenance and readiness dollars, the positive effects of funding will not remove this deficit overnight; it will take time with stable resources to sustain the upward trend.

While these factors exert a negative force on the challenges we face, make no mistake: at the core, this issue is about command. No matter what the situation, those charged with command must hold the standard that ensures our forces are trained and certified to safely and effectively conduct assigned operations. We must remain vigilant to meeting this standard, fighting against every pressure to erode it. We must look at our “can do” culture and ensure it is also a culture that promotes a clear-eyed view of safety and readiness.

We have been subject to

- budget pressures to "do more with less"
- operational pressures to put busy forces on station more quickly and more often
- schedule pressures to make adjustments to training and maintenance plans.

None of these can excuse our commanders from adherence to the absolute standard to develop safe and effective teams. And when we fall short of the ideal, we must make a thoughtful assessment of the results, and where necessary put mitigations in place. If the situation becomes untenable and we cannot meet the standard, we must not deploy until we're ready. It is the diligence and leadership of our commanding officers at every level that will implement the changes needed to ensure our Navy remains the world's most capable Navy.

These incidents demand our full attention to provide our Sailors the necessary resources and training to execute their assigned missions. I own this problem. I am accountable for the safe and effective operations of our Navy, and we will fix this. I am confident that our Navy will identify the root causes and correct them, and that we'll be better in the end. I look forward to your questions.

1           And I want to say to all of our Navy families who have  
2   lost loved ones, thank you for being here today. We grieve  
3   with you, and we owe you an explanation of what happened.  
4   And I know our leadership feels the same way.

5           Admiral Richardson, in the last year, the Navy has had  
6   four incidents involving the loss of life or injury. In  
7   three of the four, the ships involved were home-ported  
8   overseas. In fact, all in the same port, in Japan. GAO  
9   found that the Navy counts ships home-ported overseas as  
10  being in, quote, "permanent deployment status" resulting in  
11  fewer training hours for sailors. And, in fact, in 2015,  
12  GAO found there were no dedicated training periods at all  
13  for ships home-ported in Japan. The Navy concurred with the  
14  GAO's recommendations, and reported that it had developed  
15  revised operational schedules. But, as recently as August  
16  -- that's 2 years after the report, August of this year --  
17  Pacific Fleet officials told GAO that the revised schedules  
18  were, quote, "still under review."

19          Now, Admiral Richardson, 2 years is a long time. So,  
20  what's the holdup here?

21          Admiral Richardson: No, there's no excuse for that.  
22  We're investigating how that gap opened up. I'm -- there's  
23  nothing defensible I can say for that.

24          Senator Warren: Okay. I assume we're going to find a  
25  way to close this --



1           Admiral Richardson:  We are.

2           Senator Warren:  -- quickly now?

3           Admiral Richardson:  Absolutely.

4           Senator Warren:  So, let me just keep asking, though,

5   about where things have gone wrong.  At the time of their

6   respective incidents, did the crews of the Fitzgerald and

7   the Antietam and the McCain have up-to-date warfare

8   certifications?

9           Admiral Richardson:  Ma'am, many of them did not.

10          Senator Warren:  Of the three, do you know how many had

11   up-to-date --

12          Admiral Richardson:  Well --

13          Senator Warren:  -- certifications?

14          Admiral Richardson:  -- I can get you the exact number.

15   There's a number of different certifications.  And I'll

16   provide that exact number for the record.

17          [The information referred to follows:]

18          [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Admiral Richardson: But, all three of them, because it  
2 was pervasive in the forward-deployed naval forces --

3           Senator Warren: Do you know, offhand, how many  
4 overseas home-ported fleet -- how much, what percentage of  
5 our overseas home-ported fleet currently has expired warfare  
6 certifications?

7           Admiral Richardson: There are -- just about every ship  
8 has some element of their certification expired. That can  
9 be managed. If it's one thing and -- an advanced warfare  
10 mission, for instance, they just don't assign them to that  
11 mission. Where it becomes troublesome is that -- if it  
12 becomes too many areas, and particularly in those areas that  
13 are directly related to safe and effective operation, the  
14 fundamentals.

15          Senator Warren: Right.

16          Admiral Richardson: And so, that's when it becomes of  
17 great concern.

18          Senator Warren: So, it -- the GAO reported, just last  
19 month, that 37 percent of cruisers and destroyers home-  
20 ported in Japan had expired certifications in 2017. Does  
21 that sound about right to you?

22          Admiral Richardson: I'll leave it to Mr. Pendleton to  
23 do the math, but that does sound about right.

24          Senator Warren: Okay. So, let me just ask, Admiral  
25 Richardson, do you believe it's irresponsible to allow our

1 sailors to deploy repeatedly on cruises without the training  
2 they need to ensure the safety of the ship and its crew?

3 Admiral Richardson: Yeah, what had happened in those  
4 areas, ma'am, is that when -- I mean, the team out there was  
5 conscious that these certifications were expiring. And it's  
6 a bit like your driver's license expiring. It may not  
7 necessarily mean that you don't know how to drive anymore;  
8 it's just -- you know, there's -- that expire. However, we  
9 do need to recognize that those certifications mean  
10 something.

11 Senator Warren: Yes.

12 Admiral Richardson: And they need to go back and  
13 recertify. And so, what had happened instead is that they  
14 would do an evaluation, just like I discussed, and said,  
15 "Okay, well, the certification is expired. We're not going  
16 to get a time to get onboard and do the certification for  
17 some time, and so we'll do a discussion or an administrative  
18 review to extend that." That was called a risk mitigation  
19 plan. That became pretty pervasive. And so -- so, it was  
20 this, kind of, boiling-frog scenario that, over time, over  
21 the last 2 years, really, became acute.

22 And so, to answer your question yes/no, Is it  
23 irresponsible? Yes, it is irresponsible. But, I just  
24 wanted to give you a sense for how that came about.

25 Senator Warren: And I appreciate that. And what I'm

1 that have been elicited so far, in dealing with this  
2 intensely human tragedy in such an abstract way, which maybe  
3 makes it easier to address. But, I think most Americans  
4 find these crashes incomprehensible.

5 So, let me begin by asking you, Admiral, Is there any  
6 indication, so far, that there was equipment failure on  
7 either the Fitzgerald or the McCain?

8 Admiral Richardson: Sir, we're taking a look at all of  
9 that. And that'll be part of the investigation --  
10 investigative results when we come out. It's premature to  
11 say conclusively whether that contributed. But, it's not  
12 only the operating status of the equipment, but how it was  
13 operated. Was it being operated properly, in accordance  
14 with the procedures? You know, all of these things will be  
15 part of the result of that investigative look.

16 Sir, I do also have to comment on how absolutely human  
17 this is to us. Every one of those sailors is like a son to  
18 me, and the opportunity to be with their families when they  
19 see them come back in these coffins makes it intensely  
20 human. And so, we're going to get after this.

21 Senator Blumenthal: By the way, I did not mean to  
22 imply that anybody on this panel, and particularly you,  
23 Admiral, who has devoted your life to the Navy and service  
24 and sacrifice, would feel anything but the most intense pain  
25 and grief as a result. And, having a son who has served in

## **Navy secretary on recent fatal accidents: 'We have a problem'**

CNN.com

September 19, 2017 Tuesday 11:44 AM EST

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**Section:** POLITICS

**Length:** 644 words

**Byline:** By Ryan Browne

### **Body**

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The secretary of the **Navy** Richard V. Spencer acknowledged Tuesday that a failure of leadership as well as a lack of resources had contributed to the deaths of 17 sailors this year and said the **Navy** faces a range of challenges with regards to the safety of its ships.

"We have a problem in the **Navy** and we are going to fix it," Spencer told a **Senate** Armed Services Committee hearing on recent naval incidents at sea, including collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and the John S. McCain.

Spencer and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John **Richardson** faced a grilling from senators, including the committee's chairman, Sen. John McCain, who is the grandson and son of the John S. McCain's namesake.

"It's simply unacceptable for US **Navy** ships to run aground or collide with other ships, and to have four such incidents in the span of seven months is truly alarming," McCain said in his opening statement.

"How in the world does a billion-dollar destroyer not know that there is a freighter closing in on it? I don't understand how this could possibly happen and I've talked to Maine lobstermen -- they're scratching their heads, they can tell when there's a flock of seagulls are off there bow," Maine Independent Sen. Angus King asked the witnesses, questioning why the ships' radars or on-board lookouts/watch crews were unable to detect the civilian ships.

"It's really unacceptable in this day and age with the technology that we have to have something like this happen regardless of the wider issues, this is just unacceptable from a modern seamanship point of view," King added.

"Sir, I agree with you 100%," **Richardson** said in responding to King's line of questioning, adding: "Proper operation of your equipment, fundamentals of watch standing, those are the things that we have to look at."

While both Spencer and **Richardson** said that budget cuts brought about by sequestration and continuing resolutions had a negative impact on readiness and training, **Richardson** pointed to leadership issues as being a major factor behind the recent incidents.

**Richardson** called "inadequate budgets" and constraints on resources a "negative force" but added that "at the core, this issue is about leadership, especially command."

"I am accountable for the safe and effective operations of our **Navy** and we will fix this. I own this problem. I am confident the **Navy** will identify the root causes and correct them and that we'll be better in the end," **Richardson** said.

Navy secretary on recent fatal accidents: 'We have a problem'

The **Navy** has launched multiple investigations, a safety pause, and reviews in the wake of the recent accidents.

Spencer said the reviews will include a CNO-led "comprehensive review" that will "take a look at the tactical and operational situation" as well as a departmental "strategic readiness review" that he said will involve "an independent team comprised of military and industry experts that will look and examine root causes, accountability, long-term systemic issues, and then provide remedial insight."

"We are taking immediate corrective actions to ensure we meet the training and material readiness standard to prevent another mishap," **Richardson** said.

The **Navy** has also taken several personnel actions, including sacking the commander of the Fitzgerald and several other senior officers as well as the commander of 7th fleet, the first time a fleet commander has ever been relieved of duty.

But McCain but said some changes, such as prohibiting crew members from working 100 hours a week, should not await studies and strategic reviews.

"I appreciate all our plans and all our remedies but there are some of them that are just common sense that don't require a study so I think the men and women who are serving in the **Navy** would like to see some immediate action taken," McCain said.

CORRECTION: This story has been updated to clarify that the Commander of the USS John S. McCain has not been relieved of duty.

**Load-Date:** September 21, 2017

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## **John McCain: Navy leaders knew about problems years before deadly ship collisions**

The Examiner (Washington, DC)

September 19, 2017 Tuesday

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**Length:** 352 words

**Byline:** Travis J. Tritten

**Dateline:** Washington, D.C.

### **Body**

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#### **FULL TEXT**

The **Navy** knew about problems related to the state of its ships and crews years before those problems might have contributed to two collisions over the summer that killed 17 sailors, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., charged Tuesday.

Reviews in 2010 and 2015 pointed to limited training and growing maintenance backlogs that were degrading ships stationed overseas and potentially raising risk for sailors, McCain said during a **Senate** Armed Services Committee hearing on the incidents to hear testimony from the service's top two leaders.

"Many of the issues we are discussing today have been known to **Navy** leaders for years. How do we explain that?" he asked.

Adm. John **Richardson**, the chief of naval operations, said the service has been making "steady investments" to close what he called a readiness-effectiveness gap in the fleet.

"Sir, there is no explanation to reconcile those two observations," he told McCain. "While clearly there is much more to be done ... there has been also an effort to address those observations. We have not been sitting idle."

**Richardson** and **Navy** Secretary Richard Spencer testified that the service is working to find the root causes of the two deadly collisions in the Pacific but also acknowledged the service is stretched too thin to meet the global demands of commanders.

Investigations are ongoing into the USS John S. McCain collision near Singapore in August and the USS Fitzgerald collision off Japan in June. **Richardson** and Spencer have also launched two **Navy**-wide reviews aimed at improving safety.

A review by the Government Accountability Office found that 37 percent of warfare certifications are expired among ships in the western Pacific where the McCain and Fitzgerald were stationed and that crews were overworked.

"Is it true that some of our sailors are working 100-hour weeks?" McCain asked **Richardson**.

"Sir, I will not deny that," **Richardson** said. "The sailors are working very hard."

The **Navy** has conducted studies on the workload of crews on its destroyers and cruisers and tried to add more crew, **Richardson** said.

John McCain: Navy leaders knew about problems years before deadly ship collisions

Credit: Travis J. Tritten, Political Correspondent

**Load-Date:** February 2, 2018

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# ***Navy Leaders Pledge to Solve Problems Stretching Limits of Sailors***

The New York Times

September 19, 2017 Tuesday 00:00 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 724 words

**Byline:** HELENE COOPER

**Highlight:** **Navy** officials cited extended deployments and 100-hour workweeks as among factors plaguing sailors as senators demanded answers for deadly accidents this year.

## **Body**

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WASHINGTON — The **Navy**'s top leaders acknowledged on Tuesday that the country's fleet of warships and their accompanying sailors are deeply stretched because of a combination of 100-hour workweeks, budget constraints, extended deployments and delays in training and maintenance.

But they insisted that they are not ready to say definitively that those factors contributed to four accidents in the western Pacific this year, two of which left a total of 17 sailors dead. Nonetheless, Adm. John **Richardson**, the chief of naval operations, promised the **Senate** Armed Services Committee that "we will fix this."

In a moving tableau, visibly grieving relatives of the fallen sailors sat behind Admiral **Richardson**, **Navy** Secretary Richard Spencer and John H. Pendleton, a director at the Government Accountability Office. Their appearance lent a weight to the proceedings that seemed to cut through talk of mandatory budget restrictions imposed by Congress.

"Your presence here today reminds us of our sacred obligation to look after the young people who volunteer to serve in the military," Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona and chairman of the Armed Services Committee, told the family members. "It is simply unacceptable for U.S. **Navy** ships to run aground or collide with other ships — and to have four such incidents in the span of seven months is truly alarming."

The string of accidents began in January, when a missile cruiser, the Antietam, ran aground while it tried to anchor in Tokyo Bay. In May, another missile cruiser, the Lake Champlain, **collided with** a South Korean fishing boat in the Korean Peninsula. No one died in those episodes.

Seven sailors were killed in June when the destroyer Fitzgerald **collided** with a container ship near Japan. The **collision** last month of the John S. McCain — another destroyer, named after Mr. McCain's father and grandfather — and an oil tanker in Southeast Asia left 10 sailors dead.

The fallout was quick. The **Navy** relieved the Fitzgerald's captain of his command, and after the McCain collision, the commander of the Seventh Fleet, Vice Adm. Joseph P. Aucoin, was also **relieved** of duty. The **Navy** also directed all 277 **Navy** ships worldwide to **suspend operations** for a day or two to examine basic seamanship and teamwork, and ordered a comprehensive review of fleet operations, training and staffing to be completed within 60 days.

Mr. Pendleton painted a grim portrait of a **Navy** in the Pacific that is stretched to its limits. He said reductions in crew size have led to workweeks of 100 hours for some sailors. Because ships in the Pacific, home to the Seventh Fleet, are out to sea more frequently than ships in other places, those ships and crews do not get the requisite amount of maintenance and training, he said.

## Navy Leaders Pledge to Solve Problems Stretching Limits of Sailors

Mr. McCain called for a stop to long hours. "I know what 100 hours a week does to people over time, and that has been standard procedure for a long time," he said.

Several family members at Tuesday's hearing appeared to grimace when talk turned to the 100-hour workweek. Long hours are fairly standard aboard **Navy** ships, and even during scheduled times off, sailors are often called upon to respond quickly to problems that arise at sea.

During a [deployment last year](#) in the South China Sea aboard the cruiser Chancellorsville, several sailors told a visiting reporter that they routinely got less than four hours of sleep a night for weeks at a time.

The spate of recent noncombat deaths in the military has not been limited to the **Navy**. Since June, 56 service members have been killed or injured in training or during standard maneuvers that did not involve enemy combatants. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Monday that he is looking into whether military leaders are agreeing to demands and requests that are stretching service members too thin.

"We're almost hard-wired to say 'can-do,'" Mr. Mattis told reporters at the Pentagon, responding to a question about whether military commanders should be saying no more often. "That is the way we are brought up, routinely, and in combat, that is exactly what you do even at the risk of your troops and equipment and all."

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## Senators grill Navy officials on crashes, sailors' deaths



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Enclosure Q

Page 7 of 14

Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer testifies at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Capitol Hill, Sept. 19, 2017. Behind him are Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson and John H. Pendleton, the Government Accountability Office's director of defense force structure and readiness issues.

JOE GROMELSKI/STARS AND STRIPES

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By [CLAUDIA GRISALES \(/reporters/2.2467?author=Claudia\\_Grisales\)](/reporters/2.2467?author=Claudia_Grisales) | STARS AND STRIPES

Published: September 19, 2017

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WASHINGTON — A row of grieving families looked on Tuesday morning as top Navy officials told a chorus of frustrated senators that years of high operational demands combined with budget constraints could have contributed to two deadly ship crashes.

“We have a problem in the Navy,” Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer acknowledged during his first testimony on Capitol Hill addressing the crashes. “We are going to fix it.”

But Adm. John Richardson, the chief of naval operations, said he is still unable to confirm whether funding cuts and overworked crews contributed directly with the ship collisions in the summer that resulted in the deaths of 17 sailors.

In more than two hours of testimony, Navy officials assured the Senate Armed Services Committee that they are making immediate procedural adjustments as well as conducting several ongoing investigations. Aside from an operational pause in August following the USS John S. McCain crash, Spencer and

Richardson said they have boosted readiness ship inspections in the 7th Fleet, taken new measures to ensure that sailors are getting sufficient sleep as part of their work routines and prioritized repairs of ship control problems.

Spencer and Richardson were there Tuesday to account for the Navy's troubled year at sea. The service has seen four significant mishaps this year, including two separate ship collisions of the McCain and the USS Fitzgerald in June.

"How can this possibly happen?" Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, asked of the deadly collisions.

Spencer and Richardson told senators the Navy's ongoing probes into the crashes will be completed this fall. The first of several Navy probes is slated to be completed by mid- to late October.

"We will get to the sequence of events," Richardson said.

It was the second public meeting between top Navy officials and congressional members on Capitol Hill this month.

Among the attendees at both hearings was Rachel Eckels, the mother of Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Thomas Eckels Jr. Her son was one of 10 sailors killed in the McCain crash on Aug. 21.

"We just want answers," Eckels said ahead of Tuesday's hearing.

Adm. William Moran promised House members at a subcommittee hearing Sept. 7 that the service would get to the bottom of the mishaps and "leave no stone unturned."

## GALLERY





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Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer, right, talks with Theresa Palmer, mother of Petty Officer 3rd Class Logan Palmer, before a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Capitol Hill, Sept. 19, 2017. At left is Sid Palmer, the father of the sailor who died in a collision between the USS John McCain and a tanker near Singapore on August 21. In the background is Rachel Eckels, whose son, Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Thomas Eckels Jr., also died on the McCain.

JOE GROMELSKI/STARS AND STRIPES

In a report presented during the House hearing, the Government Accountability Office, a federal watchdog agency, said the Navy has been woefully behind on addressing a long list of outstanding and urgent readiness issues.

On Tuesday, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Armed Services Committee, acknowledged there are likely a series of contributing factors to the crashes, including defense funding cutbacks forcing servicemembers to do more with less.

"This is troubling," McCain said in his opening remarks. "This is unacceptable."

Among GAO concerns cited in its report, the agency highlighted an increase in the number of ships based overseas without current certifications, crew-size reductions that have contributed to overworked sailors and a possible increase in safety risks as well as an inability to complete maintenance on time.

For example, the agency reported more than one-third of needed warfare certifications for Japan-based cruiser and destroyer crews had expired. The agency had reported on the expired certifications in a May 2015 report and revisited the issue in time for the House hearing.

"As of June 2017, 37 percent of the warfare certifications for cruiser and destroyer crews homeported in Japan had expired, and over two-thirds of the expired certifications... had been expired for 5 months or more," the report stated. "This represents more than a five-fold increase" since the May 2015 report.

During Tuesday's hearing, Richardson confirmed at least one of the report's findings that sailors are working more than 100 hours a week and officials are studying the issue.

"It doesn't take a study... when you are making people work 100 hours a week, OK? I think I know what 100 hours a week does to people over time," a frustrated McCain said during one of the more tense moments of the hearing.

"Why not declare a stop, a halt right now, right now? They should not be working



100 hours a week. So I appreciate all our plans, ...but there are some of them that are just common sense. I think the men and women of the Navy would like to see some immediate action.”

Following the hearing, Spencer stopped short of saying the 100-hour work weeks are no longer a factor for sailors.

“I have not gotten that granular as far as the 100-hour work weeks,” he said. “I don’t know exactly where the 100 number came from -- the GAO report, what they did for the analysis. But obviously, it’s something we are going to look at.”

#### ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW



[Relieves two more commanders in 7th Fleet after collisions \(/navy-relieves-two-more-commanders-in-7th-fleet-after-deadly-ns-1.488250\)](#)

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Days after the McCain crash, Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, who led the Navy’s 7th Fleet, was relieved of his command. In addition, Navy officials ordered a pause of fleets worldwide and directed a review of surface fleet operations.

On Monday, the Navy relieved two additional 7th Fleet commanders: Task Force 70 commander Rear Adm. Charles Williams and Destroyer Squadron 15 commander Capt. Jeffrey Bennett.

But the Navy still faces an uphill climb in addressing the concerns laid out in the GAO report, said John H. Pendleton, GAO director of Defense Capabilities and Management, who also testified Tuesday at the Senate hearing. Among them, Navy shipyard deficiencies, the subject of another recent GAO report, will need to be addressed, he said.

“It’s going to be hard to get out of this vicious cycle,” Pendleton said.

McCain has long argued a larger defense budget is needed to address a readiness crisis in the armed forces.

On Monday night, McCain helped shepherd through passage of a \$700 billion Senate defense bill, which is now headed to conference committee for reconciliation with a House version. The plan also faces a budgetary battle later this year, since the bill will require special congressional action to exceed a defense spending cap of \$549 billion.

“There’s plenty of blame to go around,” McCain said Tuesday. But “we cannot ignore Congress’ responsibility.”

Previous GAO findings have highlighted the Navy’s longer deployments for sailors, curtailed training and reduced or delayed maintenance to meet high operational demands. The agency had previously laid out nearly a dozen recommendations to address such concerns, but the Navy had only addressed one by this month.

The agency also found the Navy has doubled the number of ships based overseas, which has resulted in reduced training periods. Also, it found during a recent 5-year period, maintenance overruns on more than 60 percent of surface ships has resulted in more than 6,000 lost operational days.

“The Navy ...continues to face challenges with manning, training and maintaining its existing fleet. These readiness problems need to be addressed,” the report stated. “In addition, continued congressional oversight will be needed to ensure that the Navy demonstrates progress in addressing its maintenance, training and other challenges.”

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
5800  
Ser N09/17U100530  
30 Oct 2017

From: Vice Chief of Naval Operations  
To: Commander, Military Personnel Detachment, Office of Naval Reactors, Department of Energy

Subj: CONSOLIDATED DISPOSITION AUTHORITY FOR ACCOUNTABILITY  
ACTIONS RELATING TO THE COLLISIONS AT SEA INVOLVING USS  
FITZGERALD (DDG 62) AND USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56)

Ref: (a) CNO Delegation of Authority ltr 5402 Ser N00/100040 of 1 Jul 14  
(b) CNO Delegation of Authority ltr 5402 Ser N00/17U100044 of 16 Jun 17  
(c) R.C.M. 306, Manual for Courts-Martial (2016)  
(d) R.C.M. 401, Manual for Courts-Martial (2016)  
(e) R.C.M. 601, Manual for Courts-Martial (2016)

1. On June 17, 2017, in the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet area of operations, USS FITZGERALD collided with M/V ACX CRYSTAL resulting in the deaths of seven U.S. Navy Sailors. Sixty-five days later on August 21, 2017, again in the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet area of operations, USS JOHN S. MCCAIN and M/V ALNIC MC collided resulting in the deaths of ten more U.S. Navy Sailors.

2. Separate investigations were convened to examine the facts and circumstances surrounding each collision. After the FITZGERALD collision, accountability actions were taken by the then-Commander, U.S. SEVENTH Fleet. After the MCCAIN collision, accountability actions were taken by the current Commander, U.S. SEVENTH Fleet and Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. In addition, following the MCCAIN collision, I directed Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command to conduct a Comprehensive Review (CR) of surface fleet operations and incidents at sea over the past decade. The CR's findings, opinions, and recommendations were signed and delivered on October 26, 2017, and provide additional insight into the collisions.

3. The complexity, scope, and tragic consequences of these collisions require that the Navy exercise due diligence in determining whether all appropriate accountability actions have been taken. Therefore, consistent with references (a) through (e), you are designated as the Consolidated Disposition Authority (CDA) for administrative and disciplinary actions related to the FITZGERALD and MCCAIN collisions. As CDA, you have the authority to review all relevant information, including accountability actions taken to date, and to take additional administrative or disciplinary actions as appropriate. All CDA determinations are within your sole discretion and are to be based upon your independent professional judgment.

4. In accordance with reference (c), I withhold the authority of all other Navy commanders to take further disciplinary or administrative actions related to the collisions at sea involving FITZGERALD and MCCAIN.

Enclosure (R)

Subj: CONSOLIDATED DISPOSITION AUTHORITY FOR ACCOUNTABILITY  
ACTIONS RELATING TO THE COLLISIONS AT SEA INVOLVING USS  
FITZGERALD (DDG 62) AND USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56)

5. I appoint Captain Michael Luken, JAGC, USN as your senior legal advisor.
6. By copy of this letter, Commander, Navy Installations Command and Commander, Naval Legal Service Command are directed to provide resources and support, as required.
7. My point of contact for this matter is Commander Dustin E. Wallace, JAGC, USN, at (703) 695-3480 or [dustin.e.wallace@navy.mil](mailto:dustin.e.wallace@navy.mil).



W. F. MORAN  
Admiral, U.S. Navy

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# Navy Releases Collision Report for USS Fitzgerald and USS John S McCain Collisions

Story Number: NNS171101-07 Release Date: 11/1/2017 9:01:00 AM

A A A



From Navy Office of Information

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- **Editor's Note:** In Figures 2, 3 and 6 in the Report on the Collision Between USS John S McCain (DDG 56) and Motor Vessel Alnic MC there are diagrams illustrating the approximate location of the collision, of other contacts in the area, and of USS McCain's intended track. The original diagrams had inadvertently depicted Alnic in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS). The Navy does not contend that Alnic was in the eastbound lane at the time of the collision. TSS boundaries have been removed from the diagrams for clarity. We regret the error.

Figures 2, 3 and 5 on pages 5 and 8 of the Report on the Collision Between USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and ACX Crystal are diagrams illustrating the approximate tracks of the vessels, location of the collision, of other contacts in the area. These diagrams had inadvertently depicted inaccurate course headings. The original diagrams have been modified to depict more accurate headings.

On Page 18, the Report on the Collision Between USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and ACX Crystal states that a Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) helicopter medically evacuated the commanding officer and transported him to Naval Hospital Yokosuka. The report should have stated a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF) helicopter conducted that medical evacuation. The United States Navy reiterates our sincere appreciation for the immense support provided by both JMSDF and JCG.

On Nov. 30, the U.S. Navy released the report on the collision between USS Lake Champlain (CG 57) and fishing vessel Nam Yang 502, which occurred May 9, in the Sea of Japan. The report can be found below."

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Navy released Nov. 1, a report detailing the events and actions that led to the collision of USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and ACX Crystal off the coast of Japan June 17, and the collision of USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) and merchant vessel Alnic MC Aug. 21.

"Both of these accidents were preventable and the respective investigations found multiple failures by watch standers that contributed to the incidents," said Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John Richardson. "We must do better."

"We are a Navy that learns from mistakes and the Navy is firmly committed to doing everything possible to prevent an accident like this from happening again. We must never allow an accident like this to take the lives of such magnificent young Sailors and inflict such painful grief on their families and the nation.

"The vast majority of our Sailors are conducting their missions effectively and professionally - protecting America from attack, promoting our interests and prosperity, and advocating for the rules that govern the vast commons from the sea floor to space and in cyberspace. This is what America expects and deserves from its Navy.

"Our culture, from the most junior sailor to the most senior Commander, must value achieving and maintaining high operational and warfighting standards of performance and these standards must be embedded in our equipment, individuals, teams and fleets.

"We will spend every effort needed to correct these problems and be stronger than before," said Richardson.

## USS FITZGERALD

The collision between Fitzgerald and Crystal was avoidable and resulted from an accumulation of smaller errors over time, ultimately resulting in a lack of adherence to sound navigational practices. Specifically, Fitzgerald's watch teams disregarded established norms of basic contact management and, more importantly, leadership failed to adhere to well-established protocols put in place to prevent collisions. In addition, the ship's triad was absent during an evolution where their experience, guidance and example would have greatly benefited the ship.

## USS JOHN S. MCCAIN

The collision between John S. McCain and Alnic MC was also avoidable and resulted primarily from complacency, over-confidence and lack of procedural compliance. A major contributing factor to the collision was sub-standard level of knowledge regarding the operation of the ship control console. In particular, McCain's commanding officer disregarded recommendations from his executive officer, navigator and senior watch officer to set sea and anchor watch teams in a timely fashion to ensure the safe and effective operation of the ship. With regard to procedures, no one on the Bridge watch team, to include the commanding officer and executive officer, were properly trained on how to correctly operate the ship control console during a steering casualty.

Download: Collision Report for USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain Collisions

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS**  
**2000 NAVY PENTAGON**  
**WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000**

**MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION**

Enclosure (1) Report on the Collision between USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) and Motor Vessel ACX CRYSTAL

Enclosure (2) Report on the Collision between USS JOHN S MCCAIN (DDG 56) and Motor Vessel ALNIC MC

Enclosure (3) Comprehensive Review of Surface Fleet Incidents 23 October 2017

The collisions were avoidable between USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) and Motor Vessel ACX CRYSTAL, and between USS JOHN S MCCAIN (DDG 56) and Motor Vessel ALNIC MC. Three U.S. Navy investigations concerning each of these incidents are complete. Command and Admiralty investigations in each case retain legal privilege to protect the interests of the United States Government in future litigation. The third investigation for each incident, termed the Line of Duty Investigation (LODI), is not under legal privilege as its purpose is to determine that Sailors perished in the line of duty and thus enable their beneficiaries to receive appropriate compensation. Collisions at sea between U.S. registered vessels and foreign registered vessels are also subject to an additional investigation, a Marine Casualty Investigation, conducted independently on behalf of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) by the United States Coast Guard (USCG). These investigations are ongoing in each case the results of each will be published by the NTSB when complete.

As Chief of Naval Operations, I have determined to retain the legal privilege that exists with the command Admiralty investigations in order to protect the legal interests of the United States Government and the families of those Sailors who perished. At the same time, it is paramount that the Navy be transparent as to the causes and lessons learned to the families of those Sailors, the Congress and the American people, and to make every effort to ensure these types of tragedies do not happen again. With these competing interests at hand, I authorized the preparation and release of reports on each collision, enclosed with this memorandum.

These collisions, along with other similar incidents over the past year, indicated a need for the Navy to undertake a review of wider scope to better determine systemic causes. The Navy's Comprehensive Review of Surface Fleet Incidents, completed on 23 October 2017, represents the results of this effort. This review is enclosed with this memorandum, and represents a summary of significant actions needed to fix the larger problems and their causes leading up to these incidents.

Finally, the Navy has an obligation to protect the privacy of individuals involved in these incidents to the extent that it is possible. With legal, privacy and transparency concerns in mind, the enclosures to this memorandum provide the Navy's findings, conclusions and actions moving forward.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

REPORT ON THE COLLISION BETWEEN USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62)  
AND MOTOR VESSEL ACX CRYSTAL

23 OCT 2017

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - USS FITZGERALD**

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### **1.1 Introduction**

USS FITZGERALD collided with Motor Vessel ACX CRYSTAL on 17 June 2017 in the waters of Sagami Wan in vicinity of the approaches to Tokyo Wan.

FITZGERALD is an Arleigh Burke Class Destroyer commissioned in 1995 and homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces and Carrier Strike Group FIVE. Approximately 300 Sailors serve aboard FITZGERALD. FITZGERALD is 505 feet in length and carries a gross tonnage of approximately 9000 tons.

FITZGERALD is 505 feet long with a gross tonnage of approximately 9,000. Figure 1 illustrates the relative sizes of the vessels. ACX CRYSTAL (CRYSTAL) is a Philippines flagged container ship built in 2008. CRYSTAL is 728 feet long with a gross tonnage of approximately 29,000 tons.

The collision between FITZGERALD and CRYSTAL resulted in the deaths of seven U.S. Sailors due to impact with FITZGERALD's berthing compartments, located below the waterline of the ship. CRYSTAL suffered no fatalities. U.S. Sailor fatalities were:

GMSN Kyle Rigsby of Palmyra, Virginia, 19 years old.

YN2 Shingo Alexander Douglass, of San Diego, California, 25 years old.

FC1 Carlos Victor Ganzon Sibayan of Chula Vista, California, 23 years old.

PSC Xavier Alec Martin of Halethorpe, Maryland, 24 years old.

STG2 Ngoc Turong Huynh of Oakville, Connecticut, 25 years old.

GM1 Noe Hernandez of Weslaco, Texas, 26 years old.

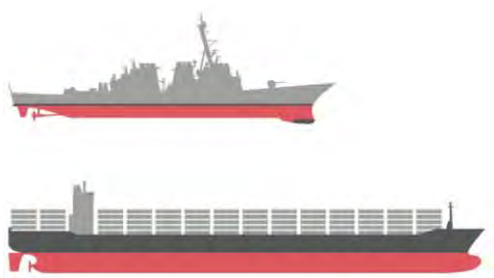
FCC Gary Rehm, Jr., of Elyria, Ohio, 37 years old.

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## 1.2 Summary of Findings

The Navy determined that numerous failures occurred on the part of leadership and watchstanders as follows:

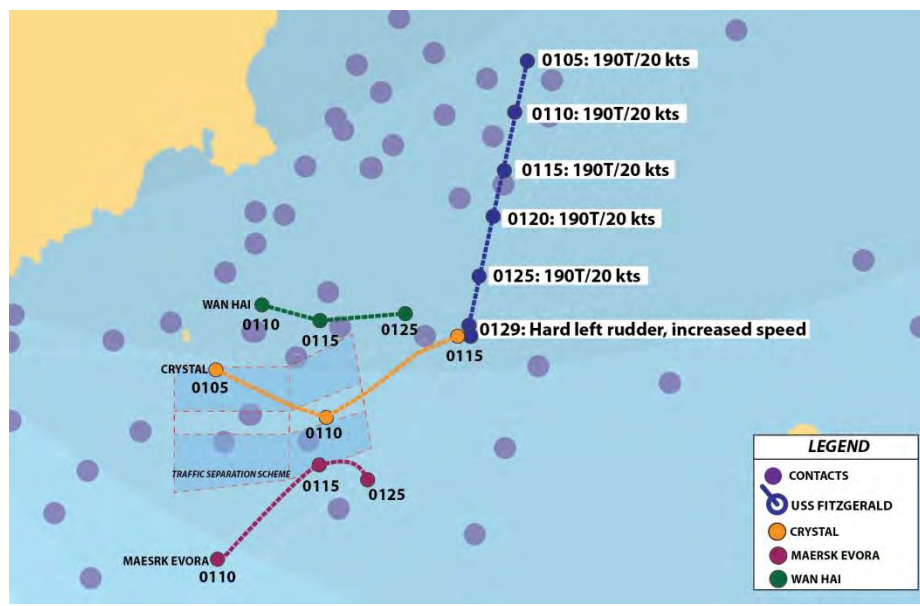
- Failure to plan for safety
- Failure to adhere to sound navigation practice.
- Failure to execute basic watch standing practices
- Failure to properly use available navigation tools.
- Failure to respond deliberately and effectively when in extremis.



**Figure 1 – Relative size of the USS Fitzgerald**



**Figure 2 – Illustration Map of Approximate Collision Location**



**Figure 3 – Illustration Map of Approximate Collision Location**

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## **2. DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS**

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### **2.1 Background**

On the morning of 16 June 2017, FITZGERALD departed the homeport of Yokosuka, Japan for routine operations. The weather was pleasant with unlimited visibility and calm seas. After a long day of training evolutions and equipment loading operations FITZGERALD proceeded southwest on a transit to sea from the Sagami Wan operating area at approximately 2300.

FITZGERALD was operating by procedures established for U.S. Navy surface ships when operating at sea before sunrise, including being at “darkened ship.” “Darkened ship” means that all exterior lighting was off except for the navigation lights that provide identification to other vessels, and all interior lighting was switched to red instead of white to facilitate crew rest. The ship was in a physical posture known as “Modified ZEBRA,” meaning that all doors inside the ship, and all hatches, which are openings located on the floor between decks, at the main deck and below were shut to help secure the boundaries between different areas of the ship in case of flooding or fire. Watertight scuttles on the hatches (smaller circular openings that can be opened or closed independently of the hatch) were left open in order to allow easy transit between spaces.

By 0130 hours on 17 June 2017, the approximate time of the collision, FITZGERALD was approximately 56 nautical miles to the southwest of Yokosuka, Japan, near the Izu Peninsula within sight of land and continuing its transit outbound. The seas were relatively calm at 2 to 4 feet. The sky was dark, the moon was relatively bright, and there was scattered cloud cover and unrestricted visibility.

### **2.2 Events Leading to the Collision**

At approximately 2300 local Japan time, both the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer departed the bridge, the area from which watch standers drive the ship. As the FITZGERALD proceeded past Oshima Island the shipping traffic increased and remained moderately dense thereafter until the collision. By 0100 FITZGERALD approached three merchant vessels from its starboard, or right side, forward. These vessels were eastbound through the Mikomoto Shima Vessel Traffic Separation Scheme. Traffic separation schemes are established by local authorities in approaches to ports throughout the world to provide ships assistance in separating their movements when transiting to and from ports. The closest point of approach of these vessels and the FITZGERALD was minimal with each presenting a risk of collision.

In accordance with the International Rules of the Nautical Road the FITZGERALD was in what is known as a crossing situation with each of the vessels. In this situation, FITZGERALD was obligated to take maneuvering action to remain clear of the other three and if possible avoid crossing ahead. In the event FITZGERALD did not exercise this obligation, the other vessels were obligated to take early and appropriate action through their own independent maneuvering action. In the 30 minutes leading up to the collision, neither FITZGERALD nor CRYSTAL took such action to reduce the risk of collision until approximately one minute prior to the collision. FITZGERALD maintained a constant course of 190 degrees at 20 knots of speed.

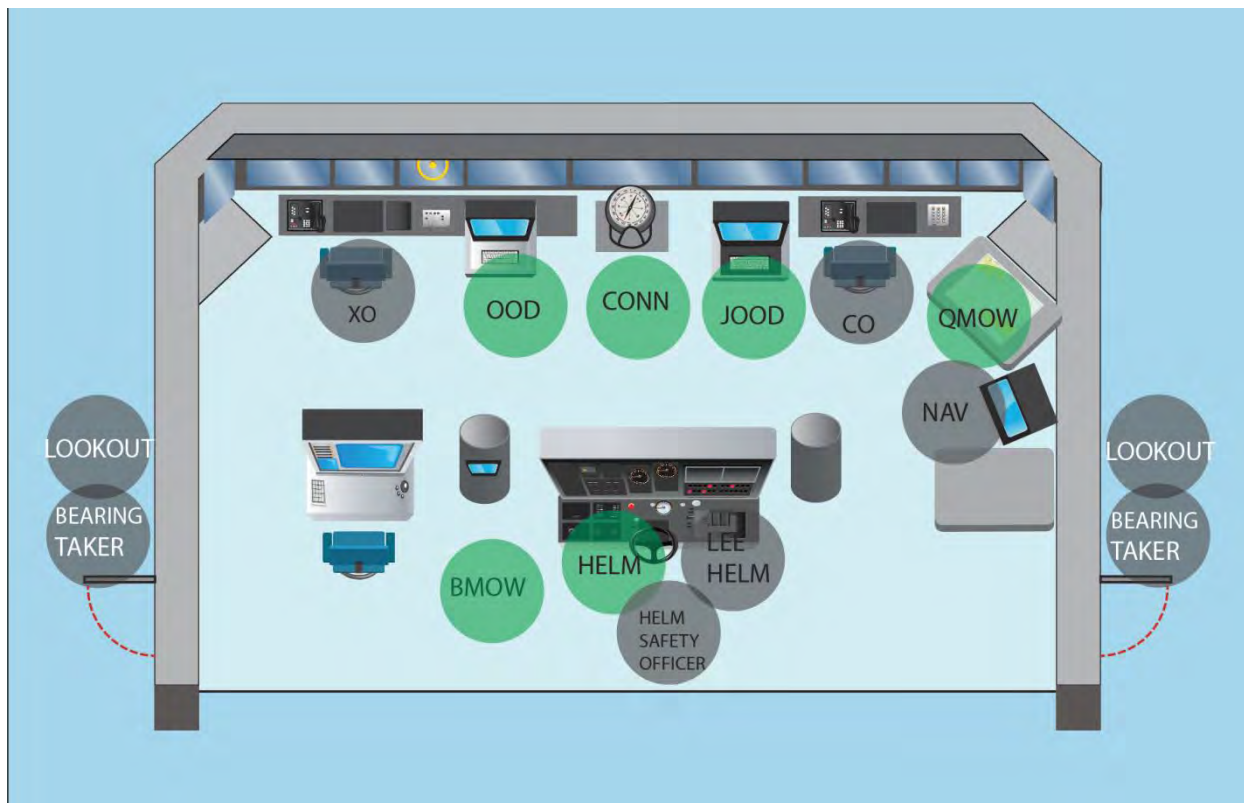
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In the several minutes before collision, the Officer of the Deck, the person responsible for safe navigation of the ship, and the Junior Officer of the Deck, an officer placed to assist, discussed the relative positioning of the vessels, including CRYSTAL and whether or not action needed taken to avoid them. Initially, the Officer of the Deck intended to take no action, mistaking CRYSTAL to be another of the two vessels with a greater closest point of approach. Eventually, the Officer of the Deck realized that FITZGERALD was on a collision course with CRYSTAL, but this recognition was too late. CRYSTAL also took no action to avoid the collision until it was too late.

The Officer of the Deck, the person responsible for safe navigation of the ship, exhibited poor seamanship by failing to maneuver as required, failing to sound the danger signal and failing to attempt to contact CRYSTAL on Bridge to Bridge radio. In addition, the Officer of the Deck did not call the Commanding Officer as appropriate and prescribed by Navy procedures to allow him to exercise more senior oversight and judgment of the situation.

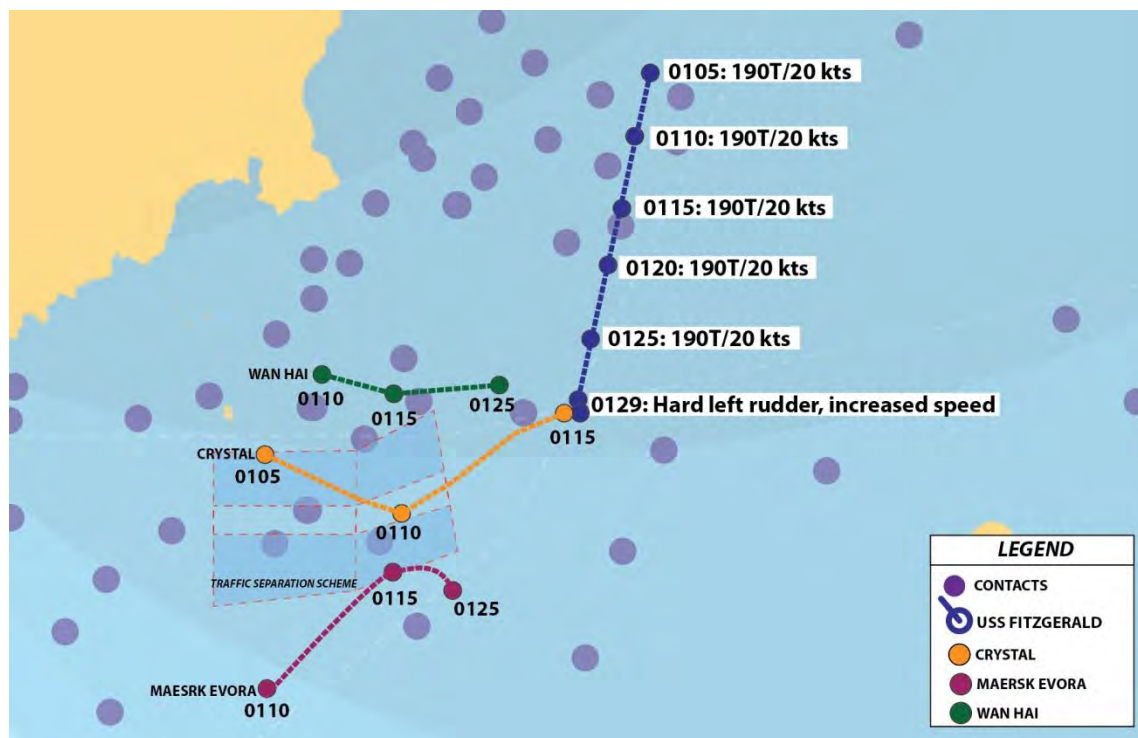
The remainder of the watch team on the bridge failed to provide situational awareness and input to the Officer of the Deck regarding the situation. Additional teams in the Combat Information Center (CIC), an area on where tactical information is fused to provide maximum situational awareness, also failed to provide the Officer of the Deck input and information.



**Figure 4 – Bridge Schematic of FITZGERALD**

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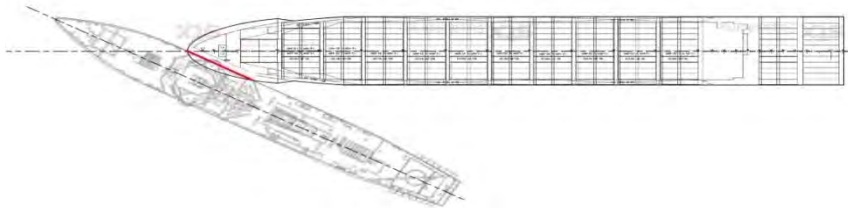




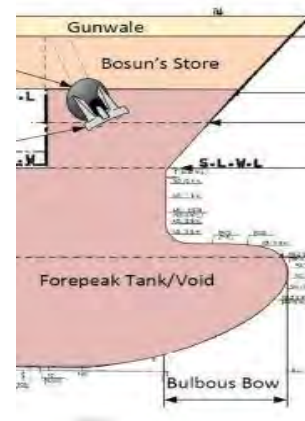
**Figure 5 – Illustration of Approximate Collision Location**

### 3. IMPACT OF THE COLLISION

The port (left) side of CRYSTAL's bow, near the top where the anchor hangs, struck FITZGERALD's starboard (right) side above the waterline. CRYSTAL's bulbous bow, under the water, struck FITZGERALD on the starboard side just forward of the middle part of the ship. CRYSTAL's bulbous bow struck the starboard access trunk, an entry space that opens into Berthing 2 through a non-watertight door.



**Figure 6 – Diagram of Approximate Collision Geometry**



### Figure 7 - Depiction of a Bow and Bulbous Bow

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after he passed away. GMSN Rigsby's body was brought to the dive boat at 0523.

The divers went back into the water at 0611 and entered the ship. Once back inside the Berthing 2 space, they immediately found YN2 Shingo Alexander Douglass, FC1 Carlos Sibayan, PSC Xavier Martin and STG2 Ngoc Truong Huynh. These Sailors were found in the lounge area of Berthing 2. STG2 Ngoc Truong Huynh's body was found underneath a television, but it did not appear that he had been pinned by the television. GM1 Hernandez was found in the main passageway of Berthing 2 nearest the lounge area. Along with GMSN Rigsby, these Sailors were all found on the starboard side of Berthing 2.

The door to the bathroom in Berthing 2 was closed. When the divers entered the bathroom, they found FCC Gary Rehm just inside this space.

## **7. INJURIES**

---

The Sailor who escaped the starboard side of Berthing 2 suffered near drowning, seawater aspiration, traumatic brain injury, scalp laceration, and ankle laceration. He was medically evacuated to the USNHY because of the severity of his injuries and released on 19 June 2017.

The Combat Systems Officer suffered traumatic brain injury with brief loss of consciousness and facial abrasions and contusions. He was medically evacuated to the U.S. Navy Hospital in Yokosuka because of the severity of his injuries and released on 18 June 2017.

The CO suffered traumatic brain injury with brief loss of consciousness, back contusion and lower extremity abrasions. He was medially evacuated to the U.S. Navy hospital in Yokosuka because of the severity of his injuries and released on 18 June 2017.

Seven Sailors were unable to egress the space and died. The loss of seven shipmates is a tragedy beyond words and a reminder of the dangers inherent in the mission of every ship and Sailor.

## **8. FINDINGS**

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Collisions at sea are rare and the relative performance and fault of the vessels involved is an open admiralty law issue. The Navy is not concerned about the mistakes made by CRYSTAL. Instead, the Navy is focused on the performance of its ships and what we could have done differently to avoid these mishaps.

In the Navy, the responsibility of the Commanding Officer for his or her ship is absolute. Many of the decisions made that led to this incident were the result of poor judgment and decision making of the Commanding Officer. That said, no single person bears full responsibility for this incident. The crew was unprepared for the situation in which they found themselves through a lack of preparation, ineffective command and control, deficiencies in training and preparations for navigation.

### **8.1 Training**

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FITZGERALD officers possessed an unsatisfactory level of knowledge of the International Rules of the Nautical Road.

Watch team members were not familiar with basic radar fundamentals, impeding effective use.

## **8.2 Seamanship and Navigation**

The Officer of the Deck and bridge team failed to comply with the International Rules of the Nautical Road. Specifically:

FITZGERALD was not operated at a safe speed appropriate to the number of other ships in the immediate vicinity.

FITZGERALD failed to maneuver early as required with risk of collision present.

FITZGERALD failed to notify other ships of danger and to take proper action in extremis.

Watch team members responsible for radar operations failed to properly tune and adjust radars to maintain an accurate picture of other ships in the area.

Watch standers performing physical look out duties did so only on FITZGERALD's left (port) side, not on the right (starboard) side where the three ships were present with risk of collision.

Key supervisors responsible for maintaining the navigation track and position of other ships:

Were unaware of existing traffic separation schemes and the expected flow of traffic.

Did not utilize the Automated Identification System. This system provides real time updates of commercial ship positions through use of the Global Positioning System.

FITZGERALD's approved navigation track did not account for, nor follow, the Vessel Traffic Separation Schemes in the area.

## **8.3 Leadership and Culture**

The bridge team and Combat Information Center teams did not communicate effectively or share information. The Combat Information Center is the space on U.S. Surface Ships where

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equipment and personnel combine to produce the most accurate picture of the operating environment.

Supervisors and watch team members on the bridge did not communicate information and concerns to one another as the situation developed.

The Officer of the Deck, responsible for the safe navigation of the ship, did not call the Commanding Officer on multiple occasions when required by Navy procedures.

Key supervisors in the Combat Information Center failed to comprehend the complexity of the operating environment and the number of commercial vessels in the area.

In several instances individual members of the watch teams identified incorrect information or mistakes by others, yet failed to proactively and forcefully take corrective action, or otherwise highlight or communicate their individual concerns.

Key supervisors and operators accepted difficulties in operating radar equipment due to material faults as routine rather than pursuing solutions to fix them.

The command leadership did not foster a culture of critical self-assessment. Following a near-collision in mid-May, leadership made no effort to determine the root causes and take corrective actions in order to improve the ship's performance.

The command leadership was not aware that the ship's daily standards of performance had degraded to an unacceptable level.

#### **8.4 Fatigue**

The command leadership allowed the schedule of events preceding the collision to fatigue the crew.

The command leadership failed to assess the risks of fatigue and implement mitigation measures to ensure adequate crew rest.

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# Navy Releases Results of the Comprehensive Review of Surface Force Incidents

Story Number: NNS171102-06 Release Date: 11/2/2017 12:22:00 PM

A A A  

From Navy Office of Information

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- On Nov. 2, the Navy released the report of the Fleet Comprehensive Review conducted by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Adm. Phil Davidson.

The collisions between USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and Motor Vessel ACX Crystal and between USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) and Motor Vessel Alnic MC, along with other similar incidents over the past year, indicated a need for the Navy to undertake a review of a wider scope to better determine systemic causes. The Navy's Comprehensive Review of Surface Force Incidents, completed Oct. 26, represents the results of this effort. This review represents a summary of significant actions needed to fix the larger problems and their causes leading up to these incidents.

The Secretary of the Navy, Hon. Richard V. Spencer, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. John Richardson, are committed to adopt suggested recommendations and to make every effort to ensure these types of accidents and attendant tragedies do not happen again. Doing so will ensure the Department of the Navy remains the preeminent Naval force maintaining security and deterrence through sustained forward presence.

DOWNLOAD: [Comprehensive Review of Surface Force Incidents](#)

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171221-N-N0101-391 WASHINGTON (Dec. 21, 2017) The Department of the Navy seal. (U.S. Navy graphic/Released)  
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**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND  
1562 MITSCHER AVENUE, SUITE 250  
NORFOLK, VA 23551-2487

October 26, 2017

## MEMORANDUM FOR VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

Subj: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF RECENT SURFACE FORCE INCIDENTS

Ref: (a) Your memo of August 24, 2017

Encl: (1) Comprehensive Review of Recent Surface Fleet Incidents

1. Reference (a) directed that I lead a Comprehensive Review of surface fleet operations and incidents at sea that have occurred over the past decade with emphasis on SEVENTH Fleet operational employment to inform improvements Navy-wide. Enclosure (1) is the report of the final results of the Comprehensive Review.
2. The 33-member review team addressed individual training and professional development, unit-level training and operational performance, development and certification of deployed operational and mission standards, deployed operational employment and risk management, material readiness of electronic systems, and practical utility of current navigation equipment and combat systems.
3. The Comprehensive Review team conducted numerous site visits, document reviews, and interviews. The team received outstanding support from all organizations. I also received helpful input and insight from a panel of highly qualified experts to ensure the widest possible perspective.
4. As directed, the report makes detailed recommendations with respect to corrective actions necessary to ensure the safety of our people, safe operations at sea, and the readiness of our forces. I recommend that you appoint a flag officer with responsibility to follow through with the recommendations in this report. As part of this effort, formal written action plans should be developed and tracked at the unit, squadron, group, force, fleet, and other appropriate levels to ensure (1) individual responsibility and accountability for actions; (2) desired results are achieved; and (3) efforts are sustained over time.
5. In light of the public interest in the recent mishaps at sea and their implications for the Navy's readiness, I recommend that enclosure (1) be given widest distribution.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. S. Davidson", is positioned above the printed name.

P. S. DAVIDSON

Copy to:  
COMPACFLT

Enclosure U

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FITZGERALD\_BENSON 000006

Primary causes of the collision were leaderships' loss of situational awareness in a high traffic area and failure to follow safe navigational practices, coupled with watchstanders who were not proficient with steering control operations or engineering casualty response procedures. Contributing to the collision were failures in basic watchstanding and seamanship among the Bridge and Combat Information Center (CIC) teams; a failure by these same watchteams to take clear and decisive action to avoid collision when in extremis; and the failure of the Commanding Officer in assigning and changing watchstanders, in ordering equipment configuration changes in the TSS, and in failing to take prudent measures to mitigate these risks. This critique of USS John S. McCain does not imply that ALNIC mistakes and deficiencies were not contributing causal factors in the collision.

#### USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) Collision with ACX CRYSTAL

On 17 June 2017, USS Fitzgerald was attempting to cross a highly congested sea lane at night. While maneuvering to pass merchant and fishing vessels and complete the crossing, watchstanders failed to visually differentiate between two vessels in close proximity and did not calculate the closest point of approach using all available means before making a final crossing maneuver. Watchstanders in CIC were inattentive, disengaged in developments on the Bridge, and unaware of several nearby vessels, specifically, a Philippines-flagged commercial containership named the ACX CRYSTAL.

As the CRYSTAL and USS Fitzgerald approached each other, the OOD became aware of the ships' relative positions and realized action was necessary. The OOD first decided to alter course to starboard, but then evaluated there was insufficient sea room to turn to starboard without colliding. The OOD then ordered the Conning Officer to come to full speed, and then flank speed ahead, and then ordered a full, and then hard left rudder. The actions were delayed as the Conning Officer "froze" in the moment. The OOD and the Conning Officer both began to shout orders to the helm. Eventually, the Boatswain's Mate of the Watch put the rudder over hard left and pushed the ship's throttles forward. These actions occurred just 30 seconds prior to the impact, and the



USS Fitzgerald had briefly started coming left and increasing speed by the time of impact.

The merchant vessel's port bow (left front) impacted USS Fitzgerald's starboard side amidships (right middle). At no time leading up to the collision did the USS Fitzgerald or CRYSTAL watchstanders attempt to communicate over radio, or take decisive action to avoid collision.

The collision resulted from a compilation of failures by leadership and watchstanders to plan for safety, appropriately adhere to sound navigation practices, execute basic watchstanding principles, properly use navigation tools, and deliberately and effectively respond when in extremis. This critique of USS Fitzgerald does not imply that CRYSTAL mistakes and deficiencies were not contributing causal factors in the collision.

#### USS Lake Champlain (CG 57) Collision with Nam Yang 502

On 9 May 2017, USS Lake Champlain was escorting an aircraft carrier. A Republic of Korea fishing vessel, Nam Yang 502 was operating in the same area, with USS Lake Champlain watchstanders intermittently tracking Nam Yang 502 for over an hour on a constant course and speed. USS Lake Champlain watchstander awareness of the vessel was inconsistent due to their poor RADAR operating technique and some inoperable commercial radar (backup) equipment. The Bridge and CIC watchteams were undisciplined in their communications and failed to coordinate common situational awareness and agreement on the safety of planned maneuvers. While changing course to maintain relative position with the escorted aircraft carrier, the USS Lake Champlain turned in front of the fishing vessel without realizing the risk of collision. The Bridge watchteam was slow to react and executed improper and untimely maneuvers in an attempt to avoid collision, and the Nam Yang 502 struck USS Lake Champlain amidships on the port side.

Minutes before the collision, USS Lake Champlain's Bridge watchstanders attempted to contact Nam Yang 502 on the radio and simultaneously signaled the fishing vessel using the ship whistle. Nam Yang's global positioning system and radio

regained should be rare; and in these circumstances, a Risk Assessment Mitigation Plan (RAMP) is produced by the ship to delineate the condition that prevents certification, the risks associated with operating without that certification, any actions (such as additional oversight or temporarily assigned personnel) to mitigate those risks, and a plan to complete the certification. The RAMP is the mechanism by which the unit Commanding Officer communicates the potential risks to his or her unit performance associated with expired mission area certifications, and the actions to be taken to mitigate those risks. Headquarters in the chain of command should then ensure an informed decision on unit employment is made. Rigorous execution of the RAMP process would result in appropriate risk mitigation measures to ensure a ship was ready for tasking.

The Review Team found that the increasing demand in the Western Pacific, driven by increased BMD and presence missions and increased dynamic tasking to support exercises and experimentation (further details provided in the Classified Annex, Appendix 9.10), exceeded the capacity that can be reasonably generated from Japan-based ships under their existing readiness generation model cycle. The time available for training was also impacted by maintenance periods extending beyond nominal durations due to an increased scope of work and number of ships based in Yokosuka. As a result of this increased demand and delays in maintenance execution training opportunities were reduced and completed warfare area certifications across FDNF-J declined from 93 percent in 2014 to 62 percent in 2016.

This data indicates the assumptions underpinning the Yokosuka-based ships force generation model, such as duration of maintenance periods, had changed to the point that the intended model could not be executed. Additionally, execution of the RAMP process for these expired certifications had become an administrative acknowledgement of the expired certifications without true evaluation of the associated risk or development of meaningful mitigating actions.

#### 6.1.2 Force Employment

Upon completion of the force generation process, a unit is ready and available to the operational commander. Effective force employment requires that the capacity of

# Scathing report blames crew errors for deadly Navy collisions

By LUIS MARTINEZ Nov 1, 2017, 12:53 PM ET

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Poor decisions and lax standards made by the crews of the USS Fitzgerald and the USS John S. McCain contributed to the deadly collisions last summer that killed 17 sailors, according to a new Navy [investigation](#).

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"The collisions were avoidable," said Adm. John Richardson, the chief of naval operations, in the executive summary to the report.

"Both of these accidents were preventable and the respective investigations found multiple failures by watchstanders that contributed to the incidents," he added in a

statement accompanying the report's release. "We must do better."

On June 17, the guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald collided with a Philippine container ship off the coast of Japan, killing seven sailors and injuring three others.



## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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## News Transcript

# Department of Defense Press Briefing by Adm. Richardson on results of the Fleet Comprehensive Review and investigations into the collisions involving USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain

### Press Operations

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson

Nov. 2, 2017

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ADMIRAL JOHN RICHARDSON: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'll just start with an opening statement. I want to thank you first for the opportunity to be here today and brief you on the recent incidents involving surface forces in the Western Pacific, a comprehensive review that examined the systemic issues surrounding these incidents, and then review the corrective action.

Before I begin I must say that throughout this investigative process, our first and last thoughts have been with our fallen sailors and their families. And I want to offer my deep condolences to those who lost a loved one, and ensure them that they will always be part of the Navy family.

A review of your Navy today shows that this morning there are 100 ships and 64,000 sailors and Navy civilians forward deployed. This includes three carrier strike groups and their embarked air wings, three amphibious readiness groups, and their embarked Marine expeditionary units, six ballistic missile defense ships on station, 11 attack submarines, five SSBNs. The vast majority of these ships are conducting their missions, some of them extremely difficult, effectively and professionally, protecting America from attack, promoting our interests and prosperity, and advocating for the rules that govern the vast commons from the seafloor, to space, and in cyberspace.

And we do much of this work with our allies and partners, enhancing our combined

Enclosure W

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capacity to contribute to maritime security and improve our lethality in warfighting at sea. In the recent three week period for instance, we conducted over 19 exercises with our partners involving 30 partner nations. This is what you expect of your Navy. This is why we exist.

The Navy's been run hard in the past 16 years of war and the pace is picking up, especially in the Pacific. Recent experience has shown that if we're not careful, we can become overstretched, overextended. And if we take our eye off the fundamentals, we become vulnerable to mistakes at all levels of command.

In response to the series of incidents in the service force in 2017, culminating in the collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald and the USS John S. McCain, the Navy conducted both independent investigations into the specific incidents to determine what happened onboard and also a comprehensive review to identify any systemic causal and contributing factors as to why these incidents occurred. Both of these efforts developed the actions needed, to prevent them in future operations.

I'll be clear, these accidents were preventable. The causes for the collisions included a failure to plan for safety, failure to adhere to sound navigational practices, failure to execute basic watchstanding principles, failure to properly use available navigation tools, failure to respond deliberately and effectively when in extremis of collision, a loss of situational awareness and high traffic density, failure to follow the international rules of the road and for John S. McCain, insufficient knowledge and proficiency of the ship's steering system.

We are a Navy that learns from our mistakes. U.S. Fleet Forces Commander Admiral Phil Davidson recently concluded a comprehensive review which was informed further by other mishaps going back 10 years.

The comprehensive review team was made up of 34 uniformed and civilian personnel and their backgrounds ranged from specialists in navigation to officers and civilians with extensive experience and a float leadership, underway operations, institutional training, equipment and systems research, development, acquisition and ship maintenance. It also included civilian experts and military members from other Navy Warfare communities and from other services. Multiple members also had substantial experience in conducting investigations and audits. Several distinguished individuals, a four star retired general and flag officers from the Army, the Marine Corps, a naval aviator and a naval submariner as well as the president of the Maryland Pilot -- Harbor Pilot Association and an academic from MIT were on the team to advise Admiral Davidson.

Q: Admiral, you've used the word "failure" many times, but you haven't used the word "negligence." Was there negligence involved in either of these accidents?

ADM. RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: By whom?

ADM. RICHARDSON: Well by several people. I mean, we found that the commander officers were at fault, the executive officers were at fault. There were watchstanders on the ships. And we've been pretty clear about identifying where there was fault and taking appropriate accountability actions, up to and including the 7th Fleet commander.

Q: OK do you anticipate legal action against some of those guilty of negligence?

ADM. RICHARDSON: I have assigned Admiral Frank Caldwell to be a consolidated disposition authority to take a look -- comprehensive look at all of these and to make his recommendations with respect to any further action we may do.

Q: Admiral, you said that the vast majority of ships are operating safely and effectively. I mean, some of the findings here are pretty stunning. For example the training continuum of surface warfare officers and candidates, quartermasters and operations specialists -- my humble rate -- does not provide sufficient seamanship and navigational knowledge in advance of milestone assignments.

So I mean, I guess the question is how could you possibly know if the ships out there is -- if the ships out there are operating and training, you know, safely and effectively, especially since there doesn't seem to be -- and the review finds -- a good way of measuring the performance as these people go along in their careers.

ADM. RICHARDSON: No, you're right. A big conclusion of the comprehensive review is that we've got to beef up the assessment process across the board, both in individual and in team training and effectiveness.

But in many cases, that assessment is going on right now. So while we did focus on this area in the 7th Fleet their assessments of readiness going on throughout the Navy which give us a sense of that proficiency and that effectiveness.

Q: Admiral, in reading through and listening to it sounds like the way this was going these were accidents were almost destined to happen to some ships or ships out there. Would



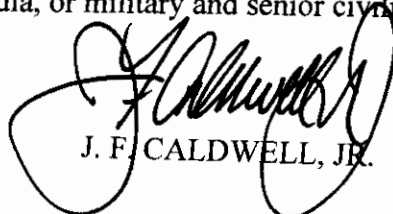
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 NAVAL SEA SYSTEMS COMMAND (SEA 08)  
 1240 ISAAC HULL AVENUE SE  
 WASHINGTON NAVY YARD DC 20376-8010

13 NOV 17  
 9 Nov 17

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subj: INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY AND DISCRETION IN ROLE AS CONSOLIDATED DISPOSITION AUTHORITY FOR ACCOUNTABILITY ACTIONS RELATED TO THE COLLISIONS AT SEA INVOLVING USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) AND USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56)

1. On October 30, 2017, Vice Chief of Naval Operations designated me as Consolidated Disposition Authority (CDA) for administrative and disciplinary actions related to USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) and USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56) collisions. I was directed to review all actions taken to date and to take additional administrative and disciplinary actions if I deem appropriate. The tasking clearly stipulated that all determinations are within my sole discretion and are to be based upon my own independent professional judgment.
2. On November 2, 2017, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) held a press conference announcing the release of the Comprehensive Review of Surface Force Incidents, which included the FITZGERALD and MCCAIN collisions. As the CNO was asked immediate questions from the press, he referenced the findings in the Comprehensive Review and related investigations. He enumerated a number of "failures" as the cause of the incidents and identified fault and negligence to several ship personnel. He stated these incidents were "preventable" and the Navy was "taking firm corrective action." I understand these statements were made in a dynamic environment focused on answering questions from the media for the public's understanding of the Navy's response. The CNO's statements were not directed to me, and did not set any expectations of me.
3. For the purpose of my CDA deliberative process, the CNO's comments have not and will not influence my decisions during any part of my review. I have no preconceived notions as to what further actions, if any, should be taken. The conclusions in the investigations are those of the investigation teams, not mine. From the appointing letter, it is clear to me that my chain of command expects no specific outcomes from my review. The only expectation perceived by me from my superiors is to conduct a review that employs reasonable methods in deliberations to promote consistency, fairness, and justice with focus to improve our fleet, maintain good order and discipline, and protect the welfare of all our Sailors.
4. All decisions and actions will be made by me within my independent discretion and influenced solely by the thorough review of the facts of each case and my own experience -- not by any external views of the public, media, or military and senior civilian officials.

  
 J. F. CALDWELL, JR.

Enclosure X



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From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Tuesday, January 02, 2018 6:23 AM  
To: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Cc: Renshaw, Curt CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: CDA  
Importance: High

Thanks Frank, please give the rest of today to consider this....I see CNO first thing this morning. Vr, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Tuesday, January 02, 2018 6:19 AM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: CDA

VCNO, unless otherwise directed, I intend to proceed with the plan to start reaching out to families this week to schedule meetings next week. Separately, I will come thru the remainder of my CDA determinations by the end of this week.

v/r  
Frank

James F. Caldwell  
Director Naval Reactors  
ADM USN

James.f.caldwell@navy.mil  
202-781-6174

---

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Friday, January 05, 2018 6:31 AM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO <william.moran@navy.mil>  
Cc: Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR <edward.herrington1@navy.mil>; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP <michael.luken@navy.mil>; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR <brian.a.ross@navy.mil>  
Subject: CDA

VCNO, today I am having my team finish up the letter outlining my intentions and recommendations. As we've come thru this, the legal team has identified some apparent limitations of my authorities, and I would like to make you aware of this discussion and also talk about a few process questions. If you have a few minutes sometime this morning I can walk you through this over the phone. We

Thanks

V/r

Frank

**From:** [Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR](#)  
**To:** [Richardson, John M ADM CNO](#); [Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO](#)  
**Subject:** RE: CDA  
**Date:** Thursday, January 11, 2018 9:52:05

---

Yes Sir...sounds spot on  
v/r  
Frank

-----Original Message-----

From: Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 9:20 AM  
To: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: CDA

Thanks Frank. It will be important to stress the steps of the execution plan, which you outline well below and which OPNAV has been and is running. Please also be sure to stress that our first stop was SECNAV himself - whom we intended on briefing as soon as your recommendations were complete.

Reasonable?

John

---

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 9:08:13 AM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Cc: Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
Subject: CDA

VCNO,

FYI, this morning I was asked to see the SecNav today at 1400 to brief him on my CDA determinations.

One of the things his aide stated was that he wanted to be briefed before the determinations come out tomorrow?? I cautioned her that we were not planning to announce anything before we notify affected service members. I mention this simply make you aware.

When I brief the SecNav I'll tell him of my determinations, and then walk him through my plan to execute my responsibilities (this is the plan we briefed to you, and that Tim Rexrode is supporting). I will also mention my recommendations regarding the chain of command, and tell him I'm working with you on these.

Separately, the team is off making contact with victims' families to set dates for face to face meetings next week. I'll get an update on this tomorrow.

Last, I think it might be appropriate for my legal team to brief Jim Crawford on our determinations - this is to ensure he is ready to provide you and the CNO his best advice. I plan to execute this week.

Standing by for any questions

v/r  
Frank

James F. Caldwell, Jr. (Frank)

Director Naval Reactors  
james f.caldwell@navy.mil  
202-781-6174

**From:** [Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR](#)  
**To:** [Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO](#)  
**Subject:** RE: CDA  
**Date:** Friday, January 12, 2018 16:22:58

---

VCNO, thank might be helpful when you are available at your convenience

v/r  
Frank

-----Original Message-----

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 10:39 AM  
To: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Subject: RE: CDA

Can connect this afternoon as well, especially if that helps you in any way. Let me know. Thanks, Bill

---

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 10:26:47 AM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: CDA

OK thanks VCNO - I can work that. I've got some other thoughts for you.

Enjoy the trip

v/r  
Frank

-----Original Message-----

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 10:07 AM  
To: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Subject: RE: CDA

Thank you Frank, spoke to CNO last night, tracking all you say below....lots of moving parts!

Lifting out of SD momentarily headed to Puget Sound and then back to DC tonight. Great trip so far and looking forward to the PACNORWEST portion next.

Let's plan to connect on Saturday, coffee my place? Good time for you?

VR, Bill

---

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 8:57:58 PM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: CDA

VCNO, today I briefed SECNAV on my CDA decisions and recommendations. I know he is going to speak with

CNO about COC accountability - and accordingly I gave the CNO a heads up this afternoon.

I wanted to lay out my thinking on the way ahead and then find some time to speak with you late Friday or Saturday.

Tomorrow afternoon I plan to meet with Tim Rexrode and my legal team with the intent of:

- finalizing the recommended public affairs guidance for unit level accountability actions
- determine the plan for bringing CHINFO into the dialogue (likely Monday/Tuesday)
- understanding where we are on contact with victim families and the planned engagement times next week
- determining the plan for prestaging public affairs guidance and RTQs with senior Navy leaders
- reviewing the plan for notifying the Hill - and the message to be carried to them
- reviewing readiness of our paperwork for legal actions and NJPs

The goal is to be ready to execute legal matters next week starting on Monday evening eastern time and family engagements on Tuesday (EST). As you probably recall, we would hold off Hill notifications and public affairs release until later in the week. Of note: the SECNAV indicated that he may want to be the one carrying the message to Hill leaders - I informed the CNO about this.

We are moving towards being ready to notify affected service members next Monday evening (Tuesday morning Yoko time). My concern is becoming bifurcated from plans regarding the CoC. To that end, I am preparing paperwork (1 page) for each leader considered - this will lay out my determinations and recommendations by individual, and allow one letter to be used for any individual legal/retirement grade determination without worrying about privacy rights. We arrived at this decision thru discussion with your JAG and others. I would actually sign this on Tuesday morning (EST) to coincide with other efforts. I speculate that this would allow you to move forward with CoC actions/processes. I can give your JAG a preview of my letter late tomorrow so that he can plan accordingly.

A lot of moving parts. Tim Rexrode has been terrific in helping us.

Looking forward to talking with you. Hope you're enjoying the trip.

v/r  
Frank

James F. Caldwell  
Director Naval Reactors  
ADM USN

James.f.caldwell@navy.mil  
202-781-6174

**From:** [Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR](#)  
**To:** [Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO](#)  
**Subject:** FW: CDA synch matrix  
**Date:** Saturday, January 13, 2018 12:01:47  
**Attachments:** [Synchronization Matrix.pptx](#)

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MAY RESULT IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES. PRE -DECISIONAL

VCNO, for your SA

- We're moving out to engage OLA
- Reading Rexrode into CDA decision so that he can better support the team
- Will send you some update products (PAG/RTQ and family outreach) a little later - I think these will go right to some of the discussion points from our meeting this morning
- I next conference with my team at 1400 tomorrow

v/r  
Frank

-----Original Message-----

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Saturday, January 13, 2018 11:40 AM  
To: Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rexrode, Timothy A CAPT OPNAV, N09; Smith, Jerry L  
Cc: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; **Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00**  
Subject: CDA synch matrix

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MAY RESULT IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES. PRE -DECISIONAL

Gentlemen,

Attached is the synchronization matrix I mentioned on the phone

- Intent is to provide VCNO a sight picture of the various audiences and messages we will deliver - and show the outstanding questions (regarding notification timing)
- You will note some question marks - that's because of the fluid nature of this. I expect to gain fidelity over the next 24-36 hours as the VCNO and CNO dialogue.

**For Jim Loeblein - VCNO directed that you be read in on the CDA determinations. I would like JR to review with you as soon as possible.** I also expect VCNO to contact you today or tomorrow to get your thoughts on messages and timing.

For the CDA team

- Please provide any comment back on the synch matrix. I will use your inputs in dialogue with the VCNO to get the answers that allow you to execute the plan.
- Read CAPT Rexrode in on CDA decisions
- Please send me the updated:
  - PAG/RTQs
  - Family Briefing Sheets
  - CDA operational planning
- Mike L - take steps to build in the agility to update JAG teams on senior leader decisions - we can talk about clarifying/updating this message when we conference call tomorrow (1400)



Thanks for all the support on this. A lot of moving parts and I appreciate your expert inputs and efforts.

Call me if we need to talk [REDACTED]

v/r  
JFC

James F. Caldwell  
Director Naval Reactors  
ADM USN

James f.caldwell@navy mil  
202-781-6174

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MAY RESULT IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES

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From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Saturday, January 13, 2018 5:30 PM  
To: Spencer, Richard V HON SECNAV  
Subject: Circling back - legal definition

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Mr. Secretary,

Sorry to bother you, but I wanted to correct an incorrect piece of information I gave you during our meeting earlier this week while discussing my CDA determinations.

You asked me if the range of possible charges we reviewed would be considered "criminal". I answered that they were not because we were considering the standard of "negligence" vs a "wanton" standard (both are in the UCMJ)

Today, while reviewing some data for a separate aspect of my CDA duties, I realized that I gave you the wrong information. Technically all violations of the UCMJ are criminal versus an administrative or civil type standard.

I apologize for giving you the wrong information, and I wanted to ensure you had the correct data.

Thanks Sir.

v/r  
Frank Caldwell

James F. Caldwell, Jr. (Frank)  
Director Naval Reactors  
james.f.caldwell@navy.mil  
202-781-6174

---

**From:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO <william.moran@navy.mil>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 16, 2018 7:24  
**To:** Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
**Subject:** RE: DRAFT Email to Senior Leaders  
**Signed By:** william.moran@navy.mil

**Sensitivity:** Personal

Latest draft:

Gents,

After serious deliberation and review, early this morning DC time, late afternoon Japan, Frank Caldwell's CDA team preferred charges on several Sailors from the FTZ and JSM (6 ART 32). This action will generate media over the next couple of days leading up to SN and CNO testimony this Thursday afternoon.

Additionally (and not public yet), knowing this action was taking place, Tom Rowden conveyed to me last night he has chosen to send CNO a letter of resignation and will step down on Friday (Rich Brown arrives Thursday). CNO does not have that letter in hand yet, so please protect for now. I didn't want you to learn of this from the media or RUMINT.

CHINFO has lead for PA and will be sending out a PA plan and PAG, to include RTQ later this morning....I will make sure you receive this info immediately.

Standing by for any questions.

VR, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 6:57 AM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
Subject: RE: DRAFT Email to Senior Leaders  
Sensitivity: Personal

VCNO. Just saw this a little while ago. I'll take a look and give you some thoughts

V/r  
Frank

---

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 3:57:50 AM  
To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO; Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Subject: DRAFT Email to Senior Leaders

CNO/Frank,

With your concurrence, recommend we send something like the following out tonight:

Gents,

After serious deliberation and review, Frank's team will prefer charges on several Sailors from the FTZ and JSM - this will occur over the next several hours, mostly in Japan. This action will generate media over the next couple of days leading up to SN and CNO testimony this Thursday afternoon. Knowing this action is about to be taken and made public, I believe Tom Rowden has chosen to announce that he is stepping down. I didn't want you to learn of this from the media or RUMINT.

CHINFO has lead for PA and will be sending out a PA plan and PAG, to include RTQ tomorrow morning....I will make sure you receive this info immediately.

Standing by for any questions.

VR, Bill

---

**From:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO <william.moran@navy.mil>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 16, 2018 17:10  
**To:** Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Crawford, James W VADM JAG  
**Cc:** Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
**Subject:** RE: Media Round Table  
**Signed By:** william.moran@navy.mil

**Importance:** High

And we are launching the press release

-----Original Message-----

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 5:09 PM  
To: Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: Media Round Table

Thanks Jim, appreciate the heads up

v/r  
Frank

-----Original Message-----

From: Crawford, James W VADM JAG  
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 5:07 PM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
Subject: Media Round Table

VCNO / NR,

CHINFO is hosting a media round table on the CDA determinations tomorrow around 1000. I am providing Captain Art Record to support CHINFO. I have asked Art to consult with Captain Mike Luken (Legal Advisor to CDA) prior to the engagement. Mike is very capable of doing this, I did not want to involve Mike as he was directly involved in the decision making and I want to maintain some distance between that evolution and the press. No action for you info only. Thanks.

V\r  
jim

**From:** [Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR](#)  
**To:** [Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO](#); [Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR](#)  
**Cc:** [Gilmer, David T CIV NAVSEA, 08](#); [Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO](#); [Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP](#); [Osterhues, Eric J CIV SEA 08 NR](#); [Smith, Jerry L](#); [Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR](#)  
**Subject:** RE: CDA  
**Date:** Monday, January 29, 2018 17:45:07

---

VCNO, I have my team sending something to CHINFO for consideration. I think it hits close to what you're looking for

In general our thinking is that we can comment on things that are done, but not what's coming up. This allows process to play out, protects the service members, and allows me to exercise decision authority. A good example is the 2 masts that were conducted and then charges dismissed.

We also talked about using the victims witness network to give families a heads up of upcoming releases - in general vs specific details.

And also discussed keeping OLA informed

I will send you something separately to give you a sense of what we're thinking about

V/r

Frank

---

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2018 10:13:39 PM  
To: Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR  
Cc: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Gilmer, David T CIV NAVSEA, 08; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
Subject: RE: CDA

Thanks Steve, we connected...looking to close up our conversation later today after he syncs with his staff back at NR. R, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR  
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2018 2:22 PM  
To: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
Cc: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Gilmer, David T CIV NAVSEA, 08  
Subject: RE: CDA

VCNO,

ADM Caldwell will be leaving Guam for HI about 1700 our time - 0800 Guam time today. He has a call scheduled with the CDA legal team at 1500. I will work with the EA and Aide to try to get the two of you connected.

VR,  
Steve

Steve Trautman  
Deputy Director  
Naval Reactors  
202-781-6136

-----Original Message-----

From: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
 Sent: Monday, January 29, 2018 1:48 PM  
 To: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
 Cc: Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
 Subject: RE: CDA  
 Importance: High

Frank, am trying to give you a call sometime today while you are in HL... I am recommending going active PA starting later today....we are getting behind the news cycle as you probably saw in CLIPS this morning. Will keep you posted, not revealing any names (of course) but we should be able to generally speak to numbers of NJP, the fact that some have even dismissed previous NJP actions, and most of all, our "secrecy" has been in the best interest of protecting Sailors and the process...we need to tell this story. VR, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
 Sent: Friday, January 26, 2018 8:13 PM  
 To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO; Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
 Cc: Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR  
 Subject: RE: CDA

CNO, VCNO,

I have completed all NJPs and NPLOC discussions planned for my visit in Japan.

Regarding NJPs, I conducted 6 sessions, and elected to imposed punishment at 4. The other 2 were dismissed. I will have my legal team ensure your JAGs have the specifics. We were in contact with the CNFJ and C7F legal teams, so they are aware of the outcomes.

PAG is still passive.

We had command representatives and ensured support networks were available for all mast subjects

There are a few folks that were not available to receive NPLOCs - I'll have to figure out how I'm going I deal with that. Also , I still have masts to conduct back in CONUS

Will let you know when I have completed all of these.

V/r

Frank

---

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
 Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 2:23:35 AM  
 To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO; Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
 Cc: Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J



CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR  
Subject: CDA

CNO, VCNO,

FYI. I am conducted masts ICW my CDA responsibilities today in Japan. At the end of the day, I will send you a summary of my determinations.

We are passive on the public affairs side and have a holding statement with RTQs. CHINFO in the lead for all public affairs and OLA in the lead with the Hill.

I will call C7F and CNFJ later today to ensure they have the background they need.

Tomorrow I will deliver some NPLOCs. I do NOT intend to communicate the specifics of these because they are between me and the service members only.

Note there are other NJPs to be conducted in CONUS after my return.

Standing by for questions.

V/r

Frank

**Andrades, Emmanuel P YN2 OJAG, Front Office**

---

**From:** Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 27, 2018 17:29  
**To:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Hannink, John G RADM DJAG CNLSC  
**Cc:** Wallace, Dustin E CDR OPNAV, RLSO SW; Griffo, Joseph T LCDR OPNAV, N09 JAG; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Osterhues, Eric J CIV SEA 08 NR  
**Subject:** RE: Morning News of Note 27 Jan 2018 (UNCLASSIFIED)

Roger thanks VCNO. My team will work with CHINFO to support. I also heard from CTF-70 of the importance to keep Commanding Officers informed - allows them to stay ahead of this at their commands.

V/r

Frank

---

**From:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 27, 2018 2:17:57 PM  
**To:** Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Hannink, John G RADM DJAG CNLSC  
**Cc:** Wallace, Dustin E CDR OPNAV, RLSO SW; Griffo, Joseph T LCDR OPNAV, N09 JAG; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
**Subject:** FW: Morning News of Note 27 Jan 2018 (UNCLASSIFIED)

Apologies....meant this to go to Jim Crawford, not ADM Caldwell....although Frank it is connected to your work. Safe travels, Bill

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 27, 2018 8:06 AM  
**To:** Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Hannink, John G RADM DJAG CNLSC  
**Cc:** Wallace, Dustin E CDR OPNAV, RLSO SW; Griffo, Joseph T LCDR OPNAV, N09 JAG; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
**Subject:** FW: Morning News of Note 27 Jan 2018 (UNCLASSIFIED)  
**Importance:** High

Jim/John, #7 is yet another example of why we need you to write something that explains where we are and why....the disinformation I heard at SWOS yesterday was troubling. Our Sailors are getting only their info from what they read in the papers and in social media. Please take this on immediately and work with CHINFO to use all media availability to get the word out....if you are already in work on this, please send me what you have in draft so I can help based on questions/feedback I received yesterday at the school house. Thank you, Bill

-----Original Message-----

**From:** OSD Pentagon PA Mailbox Media Analysis [mailto:osd.pentagon.pa.mbx.media-analysis@mail.mil]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 27, 2018 5:00 AM  
**Subject:** Morning News of Note 27 Jan 2018 (UNCLASSIFIED)

## CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

## OVERVIEW

In a meeting with his South Korean counterpart in Hawaii, Secretary James N. Mattis called for diplomacy to deal with provocations by North Korea, adding that "military options" were available to "ensure that our diplomats are understood to be speaking from a position of strength." On the defense budget, the Washington Post reported that President Trump is expected to request \$716 billion in defense spending in his fiscal 2019 budget request, representing a significant increase in funding to back the Pentagon's push for a major buildup. Also of note, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to extend Turkey's offensive in Syria's Afrin region against the Kurdish YPG militia to the Iraqi border.

## TWEETS OF NOTE

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) said "To ensure our military has the tools needed to complete their missions, and is able to stay one step ahead of the rest of the world, we need to fully fund the [Department of Defense]." Presidential Administration of Ukraine wrote: "Meeting between the President of Ukraine and the U.S. Secretary of State: Ukraine and USA agreed to restore the functioning of the Commission for Strategic Partnership" And U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley tweeted: "Great meeting welcoming [Chinese Ambassador to the U.N. Ma Zhaoxu] to New York. US-China relations are so important and we look forward to working together."

\*\*\*

## Table of Contents

## TOP STORIES

## 1. U.S.'s Mattis: Diplomacy should impose reason on North Korea's Kim

Reuters, Jan. 26 | Phil Stewart

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis stressed diplomacy as the way to deal with the North Korean crisis on Friday during talks with his South Korean counterpart in Hawaii, a day after Seoul's top diplomat said a military solution would be unacceptable.

## 2. Trump administration to seek major increase in defense spending for 2019

Washington Post, Jan. 27, Pg. A8 | Greg Jaffe and Damian Paletta President Trump is expected to ask for \$716 billion in defense spending when he unveils his 2019 budget next month, a major increase that signals a shift away from concerns about rising deficits, U.S. officials said.

## 3. Turkey's Erdogan says military operation to make big sweep east across Syria

Reuters, Jan. 26 | Ece Toksabay and Lisa Barrington President Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday Turkish forces would sweep Kurdish fighters from the Syrian border and could push all the way east to the frontier with Iraq -- a move which risks a possible confrontation with U.S. forces allied to the Kurds.

## SECDEF TRIP

## 4. Defense chiefs of South Korea, U.S. vow strong deterrence to denuclearize North Korea

Yonhap News Agency (South Korea), Jan. 27 | Not Attributed The top defense officials of South Korea and the United States have agreed to further build the countries' joint deterrence against North Korea as part of efforts to denuclearize the communist state, Seoul's defense ministry said Saturday.

## 5. Grim reminders of a war in Vietnam, a generation later

Associated Press, Jan. 26 | Robert Burns It's been over for 40-plus years, the war that Americans simply call Vietnam but the Vietnamese refer to as their Resistance War Against America.

## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

### 6. Conaway: Reason for optimism as DoD begins its first-ever full financial audit

FederalNewsRadio.com, Jan. 26 | Jared Serbu For the first time in history, the entirety of the Defense Department's financial statement is being examined by professional auditors. While no one predicts the Pentagon will earn a clean opinion the first time around - or is willing to make a prediction on how long it will take - there is good reason for optimism, according to one of the few members of Congress who is both an advocate for financial improvement and an expert in the field. Rep. Mike Conaway (R-Texas), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, called the progress DoD has made over the past decade "immense," even if there's still a "monstrous" amount of work still ahead.

## NAVY

### 7. Secrecy and uncertainty surrounds Navy discipline for fatal ship collisions

Military Times Online, Jan. 26 | Geoff Ziezuiewicz More than five months after 17 sailors were crushed and drowned aboard the destroyers Fitzgerald and John S. McCain, the Navy is declining to make public the number and nature of disciplinary actions taken against crew members.

## IRAQ/SYRIA

### 8. Eight dead as US strike hits Iraq forces - provincial official

Agence France-Presse, Jan. 27 | Not Attributed Eight Iraqis were killed on Saturday, most of them security personnel, in a US air strike that apparently targeted them by mistake, a provincial official said.

### 9. U.S. tells Turkey it will end weapons support for Syrian Kurdish YPG - Anadolu

Reuters, Jan. 27 | Tuvan Gumrukcu

The United States has told Turkey it will not provide any more weapons to the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, Turkish state media said on Saturday, as Turkey's offensive by against the U.S.-backed YPG in Syria entered its eighth day.

### 10. On Turkey's Border With Syria, Anti-Kurd Offensive Is Popular

New York Times, Jan. 27, Pg. A4 | Carlotta Gall Two large Turkish flags, flattened by the rain, cover the blasted-out windows of the 17th-century mosque in Kilis, where a rocket fired by Kurdish militants in Syria slammed into the dome this week, killing two worshippers.

### 11. Syrian City in War's Path

Wall Street Journal, Jan. 27, Pg. A9 | Sune Engel Rasmussen and Dion Nissenbaum When a U.S.-backed ground force led by Syrian Kurds took control of the northern Syrian city of Manbij from Islamic State more than a year ago, Turkey was so alarmed it launched a campaign to block further Kurdish expansion in the border region.

### 12. Russia Deploys More S-400 Missile Systems to Syria

Military.com (Defense Tech), Jan. 26 | Oriana Pawlyk Russia is reportedly increasing the number of S-400 surface-to-air missile systems in western Syria, where it operates maritime and air forces.

### 13. Syrian opposition says will boycott Russia-brokered peace talks in Sochi

Reuters, Jan. 26 | Francois Murphy

The Syrian opposition will not attend a peace conference Russia is hosting next week, a spokesman said on Saturday, dismissing the meeting as an attempt by the Syrian government's close ally to "sideline" the current United Nations peace process.

## MIDEAST

**Andrades, Emmanuel P YN2 OJAG, Front Office**

---

**From:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 31, 2018 18:34  
**To:** Richardson, John M ADM CNO; Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
**Cc:** Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Hicks, Gregory  
 CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
**Subject:** RE: CDA  
**Attachments:** 180131\_Navy Update to Accountability Actions from FITZGERALD and MCCAIN  
 Collision (DRAFT 1331).docx; Let's Talk Process 1-30-2018.docx  
**Signed By:** william.moran@navy.mil  
**Importance:** High

CNO, Frank -

Pending your concurrence Greg would like to begin family and Hill notifications tomorrow with a goal of an afternoon public release. Goal is get CHINFO release out first with Grogan's article to follow.

VR, Bill

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 30, 2018 3:00 AM  
**To:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR  
**Cc:** Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
**Subject:** RE: CDA

Team, as we tell the story, let's all agree on the releases before we pull the trigger. Alignment will be key.

Thanks.

John

---

**From:** Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO  
**Sent:** Monday, January 29, 2018 1:47:57 PM  
**To:** Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR; Richardson, John M ADM CNO  
**Cc:** Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR; Brabazon, John CAPT OPNAV, VCNO  
**Subject:** RE: CDA

Frank, am trying to give you a call sometime today while you are in HI....I am recommending going active PA starting later today....we are getting behind the news cycle as you probably saw in CLIPS this morning. Will keep you posted, not revealing any names (of course) but we should be able to generally speak to numbers of NJP, the fact that some have even dismissed previous NJP actions, and most of all, our "secrecy" has been in the best interest of protecting Sailors and the process...we need to tell this story. VR, Bill

-----Original Message-----

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR

Sent: Friday, January 26, 2018 8:13 PM

To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO; Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO

Cc: Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR

Subject: RE: CDA

CNO, VCNO,

I have completed all NJPs and NPLOC discussions planned for my visit in Japan.

Regarding NJPs, I conducted 6 sessions, and elected to imposed punishment at 4. The other 2 were dismissed. I will have my legal team ensure your JAGs have the specifics. We were in contact with the CNFJ and C7F legal teams, so they are aware of the outcomes.

PAG is still passive.

We had command representatives and ensured support networks were available for all mast subjects

There are a few folks that were not available to receive NPLOCs - I'll have to figure out how I'm going I deal with that. Also , I still have masts to conduct back in CONUS

Will let you know when I have completed all of these.

V/r

Frank

---

From: Caldwell, James F ADM SEA08, NR

Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 2:23:35 AM

To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO; Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO

Cc: Loeblein, James T RADM OLA, LA-00; Trautman, Stephen J SES CIV NAVSEA 08 NR; Luken, Michael J CAPT OJAG, TCAP; Rodgers, Jon P CAPT OLA, LA-01; Phil Sawyer; Fenton, Gregory J RDML CNRJ; Smith, Jerry L; Herrington, Edward SES SEA 08 NR; Swift, Scott H ADM COMPACFLT, N00; Brown, Richard A VADM CNSF/CNSP, N00; Osterhues, Eric ; Hicks, Gregory CAPT CHINFO, OI-00; Naman, Joseph P CAPT OPNAV, N96; Ross, Brian A LCDR SEA 08 NR

Subject: CDA

CNO, VCNO,

FYI. I am conducted masts ICW my CDA responsibilities today in Japan. At the end of the day, I will send you a summary of my determinations.

We are passive on the public affairs side and have a holding statement with RTQs. CHINFO in the lead for all public affairs and OLA in the lead with the Hill.

I will call C7F and CNFJ later today to ensure they have the background they need.

Tomorrow I will deliver some NPLOCs. I do NOT intend to communicate the specifics of these because they are between me and the service members only.

Note there are other NJPs to be conducted in CONUS after my return.

Standing by for questions.

V/r

Frank



# US Navy Statement on USS Fitzgerald and USS John S McCain Consolidated Disposition Authority Accountability Actions

Story Number: NNS180116-22

Release Date: 1/16/2018 6:33:00 PM

A A A

By Navy Office of Information

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Below is a statement released Jan. 16, by U.S. Navy Chief of Information (Acting), Capt. Greg Hicks on Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) charges preferred against individual service members in relation to the USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) collisions:

"On 30 October 2017, Admiral William Moran, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, designated Admiral Frank Caldwell as the Consolidated Disposition Authority to review the accountability actions taken to date in relation to USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) collisions and to take additional administrative or disciplinary actions as appropriate.

After careful deliberation, today Admiral Frank Caldwell announced that Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) charges are being preferred against individual service members in relation to the collisions.

USS Fitzgerald: Courts-martial proceedings/Article 32 hearings are being convened to review evidence supporting possible criminal charges against Fitzgerald members. The members' ranks include one Commander (the Commanding Officer), two Lieutenants, and one Lieutenant Junior Grade. The charges include dereliction of duty, hazarding a vessel, and negligent homicide.

USS John S. McCain: Additionally, for John S. McCain, one court- martial proceeding/Article 32 hearing is being convened to review evidence supporting possible criminal charges against one Commander (the Commanding Officer). The charges include dereliction of duty, hazarding a vessel, and negligent homicide. Also, one charge of dereliction of duty was preferred and is pending referral to a forum for a Chief Petty Officer.

The announcement of an Article 32 hearing and referral to a court-martial is not intended to and does not reflect a determination of guilt or innocence related to any offenses. All individuals alleged to have committed misconduct are entitled to a presumption of innocence.

Additional administrative actions are being conducted for members of both crews including non-judicial punishment for four Fitzgerald and four John S. McCain crewmembers.

Information regarding further actions, if warranted, will be discussed at the appropriate time."

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171221-N-N0101-391 WASHINGTON (Dec. 21, 2017) The Department of the Navy seal. (U.S. Navy graphic/Released) December 21, 2017

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## [Navy Seeks to Prosecute Top Officers for Crashes](#)

The New York Times

January 16, 2018 Tuesday 15:22 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 477 words

**Byline:** Thomas Gibbons-Neff

**Highlight:** The commanding officers of two Naval destroyers that collided with commercial vessels in the western Pacific last year will face court-martial charges, the Navy said.

### **Body**

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WASHINGTON — The commanding officers of two Naval destroyers that collided with commercial vessels in the western Pacific last year, killing a total of 17 American sailors, will face court-martial charges that could include **negligent homicide**, the Navy said on Tuesday.

After the collisions, the commanding officers, Cmdr. **Bryce Benson** of the Fitzgerald, and Cmdr. Alfredo J. Sanchez of the John S. McCain, along with their second-in-commands, were relieved of their duties. In October, the Navy began looking into further disciplinary actions.

Adm. Frank Caldwell, one of the lead officers assigned to the investigation, determined that the charges could include dereliction of duty, hazarding a vessel and **negligent homicide**, the Navy said in a statement.

In the coming weeks, the two commanding officers and three other sailors aboard the Fitzgerald will most likely be charged during a hearing that determines whether they will be taken to trial in a court-martial. If found guilty, they could face jail time.

The announcement of a hearing and of court-martial charges “is not intended to and does not reflect a determination of guilt or innocence related to any offenses,” the statement said.

A chief petty officer from the John S. McCain has already been referred to court-martial on suspicion of dereliction of duty; eight other crew members, four from each ship, face administrative actions.

Vice Adm. Joseph P. Aucoin, the head of the Seventh Fleet, the Navy’s largest overseas, and other senior officers were also relieved last year after the collisions.

In November, the Navy released reports about the June 17 collision between the Fitzgerald and a commercial ship that killed seven sailors off Japan and the Aug. 21 collision between the John S. McCain and another commercial vessel that left 10 dead near Singapore.

The Navy concluded that both collisions resulted from a chain of errors, missed warnings and poor training.

“The collisions were avoidable,” Adm. John M. Richardson, the chief of naval operations, said in a summary of the reports, released in November.

Admiral Richardson and the secretary of the Navy, Richard V. Spencer, are set to appear in front of two subcommittees of the House Armed Services on Thursday, focusing extensively on naval operations.

## Navy Seeks to Prosecute Top Officers for Crashes

PHOTO: The damaged guided-missile destroyer the Fitzgerald off the coast of Japan in June after it collided with a Philippine-registered container ship. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**Load-Date:** July 14, 2018

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## **Navy filing homicide charges against two ship commanders**

The Baltimore Sun

January 17, 2018 Wednesday, First Edition

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**Section:** MAIN NEWS; A; Pg. 4

**Length:** 438 words

### **Body**

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WASHINGTON - Five officers involved in two Navy ship collisions last year that killed a total of 17 sailors are being charged with **negligent homicide**, the Navy said Tuesday.

A Navy spokesman, Capt. Greg Hicks, said the charges, which also include dereliction of duty and endangering a ship, will be presented to what the military calls an Article 32 hearing to determine whether the accused are taken to trial in a court-martial.

The disciplinary actions, decided by Adm. Frank Caldwell, are the latest in a series of moves the Navy has made in the aftermath of the deadly collisions, which investigators concluded were avoidable. It fired several top leaders, including the commander of the 7th Fleet, Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, and several other senior commanders in the Pacific.

The Navy has been reeling from tough questions rising from the two collisions. The destroyer USS Fitzgerald struck a commercial ship off the waters of Japan in June, killing seven U.S. sailors, including Petty Officer 1st Class Xavier Martin, 24, of Halethorpe.

The destroyer USS John S. McCain collided with an oil tanker in coastal waters off Singapore in August, killing 10 U.S. sailors, including Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Timothy Eckels Jr., 23, of Manchester and Electronics Technician 1st Class Kevin Bushell, 26, of Gaithersburg.

The Navy said it is filing at least three charges against four officers of the Fitzgerald, including the commanding officer, who was Cmdr. **Bryce Benson** at the time. **Benson** suffered a head injury in the collision and was airlifted to the U.S. Naval Hospital at Yokosuka, Japan. A Navy investigation found that **Benson** left the ship's bridge before the collision. Also facing charges are two lieutenants and one lieutenant junior grade, whose names were not disclosed. The Navy said all four face criminal charges, including **negligent homicide**, dereliction of duty and endangering a ship.

Fewer officers from the McCain are being charged. The Navy said the ship's commander at the time, Cmdr. Alfredo J. Sanchez, is being charged with **negligent homicide**, dereliction of duty and endangering a ship. A chief petty officer, whose name was not disclosed, faces a charge of dereliction of duty.

In a statement, Hicks said the announcement of charges Tuesday is "not intended to and does not reflect a determination of guilt or innocence related to any offenses. All individuals alleged to have committed misconduct are entitled to a presumption of innocence."

Hicks said that in addition to the criminal charges, additional administrative actions are being taken against unidentified members of both crews.

Navy filing homicide charges against two ship commanders

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2018

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## **Navy files charges over ship collisions**

The Washington Post

January 17, 2018 Wednesday, Suburban Edition

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**Distribution:** Every Zone

**Section:** A-SECTION; Pg. A13

**Length:** 456 words

**Byline:** Dan Lamothe

### **Body**

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Five officers involved in crashes that killed 17 face criminal investigations

Five Navy officers involved in ship collisions that killed a combined 17 sailors last year will face a variety of criminal charges, including **negligent homicide**, the service announced Tuesday night.

The individuals include Cmdr. **Bryce Benson** and Cmdr. Alfredo J. Sanchez, the former captains of the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain, respectively. The Fitzgerald collided off the southern coast of Japan with a larger vessel on June 17, killing seven sailors, while the McCain struck another ship Aug. 21 near Singapore, killing 10.

Three other officers aboard the Fitzgerald also will face charges, said Navy Capt. Gregory Hicks, a service spokesman. The service did not identify them by name Thursday, but they include two lieutenants and one lieutenant junior grade. They and **Benson** face charges of **negligent homicide**, dereliction of duty and hazarding a vessel.

Sanchez faces the same three charges in connection with the McCain accident, Hicks said in a statement. In addition, the Navy is examining one charge of dereliction of duty against a chief petty officer, a senior enlisted leader on the ship.

Separately, the service also is moving forward with administrative discipline for four other members each from the Fitzgerald and McCain, Hicks said.

The potential courts-martial are the latest fallout to the collisions, which shocked the Navy, prompted congressional hearings and have left the service short two \$1.8 billion destroyers. Navy Adm. John M. Richardson, the chief of naval operations, has promised that the service will get back to basics and emphasize the fundamentals of good seamanship.

The service announced in November that it had found through internal investigations that both catastrophes were preventable and occurred due to multiple failures by service members who were standing watch the nights of the accidents.

## Navy files charges over ship collisions

Richardson disclosed at a Pentagon news conference Nov. 2 that he had assigned Adm. James "Frank" Caldwell Jr. to serve as a consolidated disposition authority for legal cases related to the collisions. The term defines a senior officer who oversees cases that can be both criminal and administrative in nature.

The service already had removed numerous people from their jobs as a result of the collisions, including Sanchez and his second-in-command on the McCain, Cmdr. Jessie L. Sanchez. On the Fitzgerald, the Navy removed **Benson**, Cmdr. Sean Babbitt, the ship's No. 2 officer, and Command Master Chief Brice A. Baldwin, its senior enlisted sailor.

In August, the Navy also removed Adm. Scott Swift, the commander of its Pacific Fleet, and Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, who oversaw its 7th Fleet.

[dan.lamothe@washpost.com](mailto:dan.lamothe@washpost.com)

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2018

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## Wittman Previews HASC Hearing on Navy Readiness Reviews, Punishments After Fatal Ship Collisions

By: **Megan Eckstein**

January 17, 2018 6:56 PM



*Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.) is pictured while chairing the seapower and projection forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. DoD Photo*

Enclosure BB

Page 1 of 6



House Armed Services Committee members will have a chance on Thursday to ask Navy leadership how it will take action in the aftermath of two recent surface readiness reviews and to follow up on this week's announcement of criminal and administrative actions taken against Navy officers involved in last summer's two fatal surface ship collisions.

The HASC readiness and seapower and projection forces subcommittees **will host a joint hearing Thursday afternoon with Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson.**

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.), who chairs the seapower and projection forces subcommittee, told USNI News on Wednesday that his primary objective for the hearing is to "determine the process that they'll go through to synthesize those two (readiness) reports to come out with an action plan, and then the timeframes they propose to put into that action plan."

Richardson told USNI News last week that he would **create a single comprehensive plan based on the recommendations of the two reports**, something his staff is still working on.

Though Wittman said he wanted to hear what the Navy had to say about a couple topics before the committee took action, he made clear to USNI News that "I think the outcome will be a number of directives in this year's [National Defense Authorization Act] that will respond to these two incidents and to the comprehensive review and the strategic readiness review."

One particular area Wittman is eyeing is the creation of "a single Tier 2 Echelon command consolidation" that would put one organization, likely U.S. Fleet Forces, in charge of all man, train and equip policy for the entire Navy. Under current law, U.S. Fleet Forces Command and U.S. Pacific Fleet may implement different policies in the East Coast and West Coast fleets. A consolidation of that authority would likely be accompanied by "doing away with the 4th Fleet and reestablishing the 2nd Fleet, so

there's an East Coast and a West Coast comparable command structure for fleet management" and preparation of deployable forces, Wittman said.

Wittman listed four other priorities of his that he wants to solicit Navy feedback on in the hearing before determining what, if any, legislation to write on the topic. He said he wanted to discuss manning in the Navy to ensure that forward-deployed ships are able to plan for manning at a maximum-needed level and not a minimum level; **ship repair capabilities in Japan and what it would mean for the rest of the fleet** to ensure that Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) ships are able to return to the United States every seven to 10 years for a deep-dive maintenance and modernization availability; how to create more expertise within the ranks; and how to provide new junior officers with more at-sea experience before reporting for duty.



*Contractors from the Fleet Activities Yokosuka Ship Repair Facility perform maintenance on the guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) as it rests in dry dock on March 23, 2009. US Navy photo.*

On the expertise issue, Wittman said he wants to see “a depth to the surface navy that we see in other areas – we see those things happen in aviation, we see those things happen in the submarine force.”

“Now in the surface navy everybody is encouraged to generalize, so you get a little bit here, a little bit there, you get a little bit of knowledge on engineering, you get a little bit of knowledge on ship systems, you get a little bit of knowledge on combat systems, you get a little bit of knowledge on seamanship and navigation – but never a place where you can really establish expertise,” he said.

“And then as these individuals make their way up through command and make decisions later on in force structure, in force operation, I think it’s very useful to have an area of specialization – so somebody that works in the ship systems engineering area can really be an expert there, so that as they pursue their Navy career they are the subject matter expert there, so when there’s decisions made on operations, decisions made on acquisition, you have somebody there who’s a real expert.”

**Regarding junior officer at-sea experience**, Wittman said “simulation is great” but that “taking a junior officer as an ensign, putting them directly at sea onboard a surface ship with them having served no time at sea on the bridge of a ship, and having them stand watch and say, okay, now you’re going to assume a rotation on the bridge commanding the ship, it expects a little bit too much.”

The six issues Wittman identified were also mentioned in the U.S. Fleet Forces Command-led Comprehensive Review on Recent Surface Force Incidents and in the Navy Secretary-directed Strategic Readiness Review.



*Lt. Cmdr. Steven T. Benefield navigates the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson (DDG-102) while conducting a fueling-at-sea on Dec. 5, 2017. US Navy Photo*

Separate from these two reviews following two fatal surface ship collisions and two non-fatal mishaps in U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy also announced it was charging several officers involved in the fatal collisions with negligent homicide, dereliction of duty and hazarding a vessel. USNI News also reported this week that Commander of Naval Surface Forces **Vice Adm. Tom Rowden would leave the Navy ahead of his planned Feb. 2 retirement** as a result of the incidents.

Wittman told USNI News, “I find this to be very appropriate – extraordinarily serious, but very appropriate in light of the severity of these two incidents and the things the surface navy is facing. I’ve been very encouraged by Navy actions.”

“I think the Navy is elevating this to the proper level: from the actions here with Adm. Rowden to the issues with court-martial and the charges placed upon the officers involved in these incidents, I think (the actions) rise exactly to the level that is necessary to demonstrate the seriousness of these issues,” he continued.

“And I think it’s extraordinarily important to make sure the Navy sends a signal not just to folks outside the Navy but also within the Navy as to the level of operation and

responsibility and accountability they expect within the Navy, and then if that doesn't occur the severity of actions that will result because of that. I think that sends an extraordinarily strong message both inside and outside the Navy as to the importance of this issue."







# RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

United States Senator for Connecticut

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## Blumenthal Statement on Investigation Into Charges Against Commanders of USS Fitzgerald And USS John S. McCain

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Tuesday, January 16, 2018

(Washington, DC) -- U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) issued the following statement regarding possible criminal charges-- including negligent homicide-- against Commanding officers and leaders of the U.S.S. Fitzgerald and U.S.S. John S. McCain. Seventeen sailors, including two from Connecticut, died in deadly collisions on board the ships last summer.

**"The deadly collisions that took the lives of seventeen sailors last summer, including two from Connecticut, must never happen again. I support the Navy's efforts to confront any and all deficiencies that contributed to these avoidable tragedies. The serious charges to be considered against Commanding officers and leaders on both ships are a step toward accountability for the families and friends of those brave sailors. Other strong steps are necessary. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I will do everything possible to make sure the Navy has the resources and leadership to protect our sailors and the world's greatest Navy."**

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# Navy, Congress Looking to Clarify Command and Control of U.S. Pacific Fleet

By: **Megan Eckstein**

January 18, 2018 8:07 PM



*The Nimitz-class aircraft carriers USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), left, and USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) conduct dual aircraft carrier strike group operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific. US Navy photo.*

CAPITOL HILL – The Navy and lawmakers are considering how to clarify the chain of command for forward-deployed surface forces to ensure future readiness and accountability while service leadership insists it has done a sufficient job holding accountable those who contributed to last year's fatal destroyer collisions.

With criminal charges levied against six individuals who were present on destroyers USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG-62) and USS *John S. McCain* (DDG-56) when they collided with merchant ships last year, and firings that include the destroyer squadron commander, the local task force commander, the U.S. 7th Fleet commander and the commander of Naval Surface Forces, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said the Navy is holding senior leadership accountable to a degree not seen since World War II.

"The accountability actions addressed those things for which those commanders had complete ownership – they had the responsibility, accountability and authority to act to avoid the series of decisions that resulted in either a collision or an assignment of a ship that wasn't ready to do its mission," Richardson explained during a hearing at the House Armed Services Committee



today.

“So each one of those was appreciated on its individual merit, and we strongly believe the accountability measures were appropriate.”

Richardson told reporters after the hearing that criminal charges were limited to those physically on the ships during the collisions with the mindset that, “with respect to the proximate cause of the collisions, there was nothing that was outside the commanding officer’s and the crew’s span of control to prevent those collisions.”

Ultimately, Richardson said “I am responsible for crushing any obstacles that prevent our sailors from achieving warfighting and safe operations at sea,” and Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer said at the hearing that he was “the responsible one and accountable for our most valuable resources.”

However, one HASC member at the hearing pointed the finger higher up the Navy.

"I also would like you to take more responsibility that the *McCain* and *Fitzgerald* were basically 20 years old, and training that goes on those ships, and the fact that they're in Yokosuka and not being maintained like everything else, is really a function of, I think, higher-up decisions than what you are concerned with," Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (D-Hawaii) said at the hearing.

Part of the confusion regarding accountability deals with a complex chain of command for forces operating in the Pacific. A 2011 legislative statement, now called the Inouye Amendment, states that "none of the funds available to the Department of Defense may be obligated to modify command and control relationships to give Fleet Forces Command administrative and operational control of U.S. Navy forces assigned to the Pacific fleet" and that "the command and control relationships which existed on October 1, 2004, shall remain in force unless changes are specifically authorized in a subsequent Act."

Due to this language, still in effect, Richardson said at the hearing, "the way that this amendment was structured allows really two standards to emerge. We need to have one single standard of excellence."

"This Inouye Amendment, as it was called, is just one I would say artificial seam that inhibits us from establishing that single standard," the CNO continued.

HASC seapower and projection forces subcommittee ranking member Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) said at the hearing that "Congress has contributed to these systemic readiness issues in the surface forces. Specifically, recent defense appropriations bills have carried language which restricts the Navy from realigning its man, train and equip functions under a single command. These congressionally mandated command and control restrictions have allowed an unusual situation to continue in the Pacific Fleet, which is responsible for both deploying forces and determining when those forces are ready to deploy, and to do so separate from the rest of the fleet. ... This arrangement allows ships to be deployed without basic certifications and without meaningful plans to mitigate the risk to our sailors. While there is disagreement in the **comprehensive review** and the **strategic review** about the best actual command and control structure for Navy surface forces, it is clear that continued congressional limitation in this area is a hindrance to the management and readiness of the fleet."

**Seapower subcommittee chairman Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.)** told USNI News he was committed to doing away with the Inouye Amendment to allow a single command to oversee man, train and equip policy, while a U.S. 3rd Fleet and U.S. 2nd Fleet structure would allow for

the execution of preparing ready forces, and the remaining numbered fleets would be the consumers of those ready forces.

Despite general agreement from the Navy and lawmakers at the hearing about the need to do away with that separation of East Coast and West Coast decision-making, Hanabusa – who hails from Hawaii, the home of U.S. Pacific Fleet, just like the late Sen. Daniel Inouye who wrote the legislative language still in place today – expressed her concerns at the hearing.

“I don’t disagree with the standard of excellence, the single standard of excellence; however, I would like to press upon you that the Pacific is different. Where these accidents occurred, especially the *McCain*, is in a very busy area. ... What we are faced with is a lot of commercial traffic,” she said.

“I believe the Pacific is different than the European theater, it is different, and the reason why I feel the senator probably put in what you call the Inouye Amendment is to ensure that the difference of that which is the Pacific would become formal in everyone’s mind.”

Even as lawmakers work out how to approach the legalities of realigning the Pacific Fleet and U.S. Fleet Forces, Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said at the hearing that he’s moving ahead with simplifying the chain of command where possible under his current authority.

Spencer said he recently met with three- and four-star admirals to map out command and control lines, keeping in mind that “our goal should be that the commander of a ship should have a clear line to know what he or she is reporting to, and whom she or he is reporting to. We should also have a clear line of sight from command on down as to where responsibilities lie. When we look at the chart, we have not come to final conclusions yet but we’re in an iterative process which will have our first step forthcoming soon. We wanted to clean up exactly what you are talking about, which is the ability for us to act in the most efficient manner possible with the most direct lines of communication.”

Spencer added that, “in the case of the Pacific Fleet, we have an issue that I believe is going to be ameliorated [if] we do away with what used to be known as the Inouye Amendment.”



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#### Related

## **Henderson, Justin C LCDR OJAG, Navy DCAP**

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**Subject:** RE: CNO All Hands Calls

-----Original Message-----

From: Record, Warren A CAPT OJAG, Criminal Law

Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2018 10:17 AM

To: Bobbitt, Karetta L LNC OJAG, \NLSC IG <karetta.bobbitt@navy.mil>; Coffman, Jeanette E LNC OJAG, Code 20 <jeanette.coffman1@navy.mil>; Einhorn, Allison K CIV OJAG, Code 20 <allison.k.einhorn@navy.mil>; Kraemer, James L JR LT OJAG, Code 20 <james.l.kraemer@navy.mil>; Loutinsky, Genevieve P LT OJAG, Code 30 <genevieve.loutinsky@navy.mil>; Martinson, James CIV OJAG, Code 20 <james.martinson@navy.mil>; Mulhern, Daniel J., LT OJAG, Code 20 <daniel.j.mulhern@navy.mil>; Nica, Alexandra LT OJAG, Code 20 <alexandra.nica@navy.mil>; Pietrzyk, Jeff J LCDR OJAG, Code 20 <jeff.pietrzyk@navy.mil>; Pollio, Jennifer L LCDR OJAG, Code 20 <jennifer.pollio@navy.mil>; Record, Warren A CAPT OJAG, Criminal Law <warren.record@navy.mil>; Sanchez, Shannon N CTR OJAG, Code 20 <shannon.n.sanchez.ctr@navy.mil>; Waits, John K CIV OJAG, Code 20 <john.waits@navy.mil>  
Cc: Record, Warren A CAPT OJAG, Criminal Law <warren.record@navy.mil>  
Subject: FW: CNO All Hands Calls

Team:

Please see below WRT 25 Jan CNO All Hands Call.

Very respectfully,

CAPT Art Record, JAGC, USN

Deputy Assistant Judge Advocate General (Criminal Law) Office of the Judge Advocate General  
1254 Charles Morris St. SE, Suite B01  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5124

Phone: (202) 685-7057

Cell: (703) 835-7629

Email: warren.record@navy.mil

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-----Original Message-----

From: Lecce, Daniel J Colonel, USMC OJAG, CODE 02

Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2018 9:09 AM

To: Danyluk, Valerie C COL OJAG; House, Andrew R CAPT OJAG, Code 45; Record, Warren A CAPT OJAG, Criminal Law; Smith, Ursula M LCDR OJAG, Code 30; Mossor, William J CAPT OJAG, NAMARA Code 40

Cc: Keller, Brian K Mr. NAMARA, CODE 46; ONeil, Kelli A Maj OJAG, Code 46; Snyder, Rebecca S CIV OJAG, CODE 45; Ostrom, Donald R LCDR OJAG, Code 45; Waits, John K CIV OJAG, Code 20; Pietrzyk, Jeff J LCDR OJAG, Code 20; Loutinsky, Genevieve P LT OJAG, Code 30  
Subject: FW: CNO All Hands Calls

Directors--Please see below. This is an All-Hands Navy event in the Pentagon.

V/R, DJL

-----Original Message-----

From: Yuzon, Florencio J CAPT OJAG, Code 00/001  
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2018 9:04 AM  
To: Kiamos, Paul C CAPT AJAG 01, Front Office; Lecce, Daniel J Colonel, USMC OJAG, CODE 02; Modzelewski, Moira D CAPT Chief Judge NMCCA/OJAG, CODE 51; Sharp, Gary E CAPT OJAG, Code 06; Ritchie, Jondell LNCM OJAG, SEL  
Cc: Werner, Meredith LCDR OJAG, Code 01; Gonzales, Steven P LCDR OJAG, Code 05; Hudson, Latham T LCDR OJAG, Code 00/001; Reintjes, Christopher M LCDR OJAG, Code 00/001; Sklerov, Matthew J CDR OJAG, Front Office; Koningisor, Jessica E LT OJAG, Code 00/001; Anderson, Keleigh LT OJAG, Code 00/001; Yuzon, Florencio J CAPT OJAG, Code 00/001  
Subject: CNO All Hands Calls

All: good morning. BLUF, CNO will conduct a series of All Hands Calls in the Pentagon Auditorium next week. Due to the size of the Navy footprint, various divisions and codes are assigned time slots for attendance, and OJAG's appointed time is 1500-1600, 25 Jan. I respectfully ask that you widely disseminate this.

JAG asks that our personnel attend the All Hands Call, subject to overriding mission requirements.

Many thanks in advance.

V/r, Flo

Florencio "Flo" Yuzon  
CAPT, JAGC, USN  
Executive Assistant to the  
Judge Advocate General of the Navy  
703-614-7420

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-----Original Message-----

From: Triplett, Will M CAPT OPNAV, DNS EA  
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 2:18 PM  
To: OPNAV ALL  
Cc: john.w.lefavour.mil@mail.mil; Marty, Stephen A CDR USN BUMED FCH VA (US); Yuzon, Florencio J CAPT OJAG, Code 00/001; Fields, Cynthia J CDR CHINFO, EA  
Subject: CNO All Hands Calls

OPNAV Staff,

CNO will be conducting All Hands Calls in the Pentagon Auditorium on 25 and 26 Jan. Below is the schedule with the date and time for your respective directorate:

-Thursday, 25 JAN 2018

1300 - 1400 (N9, N095, OLA)

1500 - 1600 (N3N5, DNS, OJAG, N093\*)

-Friday, 26 JAN 2018

1230 - 1330 (N2N6, N097, CHINFO, CNO, VCNO, MCPON, N093\*)

1430 - 1530 (N4, N8)

CNO's All Hands call with N1 which will be held at NSF Arlington on the following date:

-Wednesday, 31 JAN 2018 (Location: NSF Arlington)

1500 - 1600 (N1)

Please be in your seats 15 minutes prior to the start of your respective All Hands Call.

Vr,

CAPT Will Triplett  
Executive Assistant  
Director, Navy Staff  
(W) (703) 692-9026  
(C) (703) 835-7594  
(C) (540) 429-6137

## **Henderson, Justin C LCDR OJAG, Navy DCAP**

---

**Subject:** RE: Accountability in history

-----Original Message-----

From: Cox, Samuel J SES NHHC, DNS-H

Sent: Friday, March 09, 2018 6:39 AM

To: Richardson, John M ADM CNO

Cc: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Kopplin, Shannon H CAPT OPNAV, N00J;

Wikoff, George M CAPT OPNAV, N00

Subject: RE: Accountability in history

CNO, I most certainly can help. Do you have a target due date? Very respectfully, Sam

Samuel J. Cox

RADM, USN (Retired)

Director of Naval History

Curator of the Navy

Director, Naval History and Heritage Command

202-433-2210 samuel.cox@navy.mil

-----Original Message-----

From: Richardson, John M ADM CNO

Sent: Friday, March 09, 2018 6:37 AM

To: Cox, Samuel J SES NHHC, DNS-H

Cc: Moran, William F ADM, OPNAV, VCNO; Crawford, James W VADM JAG; Kopplin, Shannon H CAPT OPNAV, N00J;

Wikoff, George M CAPT OPNAV, N00

Subject: Accountability in history

Sam, hope you're doing well. I've been thinking about the punitive measures taken in the FITZGERAD and MCCAIN cases. Severe.

I was wondering how this fits into history - what are the accountability measures taken in historical incidents? I've got the history for collisions. What about things like Pearl Harbor? The loss of Halsey's ships in the typhoons? Guadalcanal? SCORPION? There are some examples even from 1812.

You see what I'm getting at. I'd like to get a comparative sense of the history here.

Can you help? Thanks.

VR/ John

## Chief of Naval Operations

**9/18/2015 - Present**

### **Admiral John M. Richardson**

Admiral John Richardson graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1982 with a Bachelor of Science in Physics. He holds master's degrees in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and National Security Strategy from the National War College.

At sea, Richardson served on USS Parche (SSN 683), USS George C. Marshall (SSBN 654) and USS Salt Lake City (SSN 716). He commanded USS Honolulu (SSN 718) in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Richardson also served as commodore of Submarine Development Squadron (DEVRON) 12; commander, Submarine Group 8; commander, Submarine Allied Naval Forces South; deputy commander, U.S. 6th Fleet; chief of staff, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Africa; commander, Naval Submarine Forces, and director of Naval Reactors.

His staff assignments include duty in the attack submarine division on the Chief of Naval Operations staff; naval aide to the President; prospective commanding officer instructor for Commander, Submarine Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet; assistant deputy director for Regional Operations on the Joint Staff; and director of Strategy and Policy at U.S. Joint Forces Command.

Richardson served on teams that have been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Navy Unit Commendation, and the Navy "E" Ribbon. He was awarded the Vice Admiral Stockdale Award for his time in command of USS Honolulu.

Richardson began serving as the 31st Chief of Naval Operations September 18, 2015.



*Updated: 18 September 2015*

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## Vice Chief of Naval Operations

**5/31/2016 - Present**

### **Admiral Bill Moran**

Adm. Bill Moran is a native of New York and graduated with a Bachelor of Science from the United States Naval Academy in 1981 and a master's degree from the National War College in 2006.

As a flag officer, he has served as commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group; director, Air Warfare (N98) on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations; and most recently as the 57<sup>th</sup> chief of naval personnel.

His operational tours spanned both coasts, commanding Patrol Squadron (VP) 46 and Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2. He served as an instructor pilot in two tours with VP-30 and as a staff member for Commander, Carrier Group 6 aboard USS *Forrestal* (CVA 59).



Ashore, he served as executive assistant to the chief of naval operations; executive assistant to Commander, U.S. Pacific Command; deputy director, Navy staff; and assistant Washington placement officer and assistant flag officer detailee in the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Moran assumed duties as the Navy's 39th vice chief of naval operations, May 31, 2016. He is a senior naval advisor to the secretary of the Navy and the chief of naval operations.

He is entitled to wear the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (five awards) and other various personal, unit and service awards.

*Updated: 31 May 2016*

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# United States Navy Biography

## **Vice Admiral James W. Crawford, III** **Judge Advocate General** **Judge Advocate General's Corps**

Vice Adm. James W. Crawford III was born in Charlotte, North Carolina. He graduated from Belmont Abbey College in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He was commissioned through the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps Student Program and in 1983 graduated from the University of North Carolina School of Law at Chapel Hill. He later earned a Master of Laws in Ocean and Coastal Law from the University of Miami School of Law and a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College.



Crawford served from 2012-2015 as the deputy judge advocate general of the Navy and commander, Naval Legal Service Command. As commander, Naval Legal Service Command, he led the judge advocates, enlisted legalmen and civilian employees of 14 commands worldwide, providing prosecution and defense services, legal assistance services to individuals and legal support to shore and afloat commands.

Crawford served from 2007-2011 as legal counsel to the chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. From 2011-2012, he served as commander, NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission/Rule of Law Field Force-Afghanistan.

Before his appointment to flag rank, he served as special counsel to the chief of naval operations, the senior staff judge advocate for the commander, U.S. Pacific Command and as the fleet judge advocate for U.S. 7th Fleet. In command, he served as commanding officer, Region Legal Service Office Southeast.

Crawford also served at Navy Personnel Command; the Office of the Legal Counsel to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Naval War College; commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe; the Naval Justice School and Cruiser-Destroyer Group 8. He began his legal career as a defense counsel at the Naval Legal Service Trial Defense Activity, Naval Air Station Jacksonville.

Crawford is the 43rd judge advocate general of the Navy. Crawford is the principal military legal counsel to the secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations and serves as the Department of Defense representative for ocean policy affairs (REPOPA). He also leads the 2,300 attorneys, enlisted legalmen and civilian employees of the worldwide Navy JAG Corps community.

Crawford is a member of the state bar of North Carolina. His personal decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal (three awards), the Legion of Merit (three awards), the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (two awards),

the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (three awards) and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

*Updated: 8 May 2017*

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# United States Navy Biography

## **Rear Admiral George M. Wikoff** **Deputy Director for Operations, National Joint Operations Intelligence Center, Operations** **Team Five, J3, Joint Staff**

Rear Admiral George M. Wikoff is a native of New Brunswick, New Jersey and graduated from the Catholic University of America in 1990, with a Bachelor of Arts in Financial Management. He received his commission through the George Washington University NROTC program, earned a Master of Science in Operational Management from the University of Arkansas, and is a Joint Specialty Officer.

Wikoff was designated a naval aviator at Naval Air Station Meridian in February 1993. He served operationally as an F-14 pilot in Fighter Squadron (VF) 102 on USS America (CV 66) and as department head with VF-154 in Atsugi, Japan on USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63). Command assignments include Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 211 "Checkmates", where he deployed on USS Enterprise (CVN 65) in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the VFA-122 "Flying Eagles", the west coast Strike Fighter Fleet Replacement Squadron, and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3, deployed on USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Wikoff's shore assignments include the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center, as TOPGUN training officer; Naval Personnel Command, as placement officer for the Tomcat and Super Hornet communities; Joint Staff, as an action officer in the Operations Directorate, Deputy Directorate for Antiterrorism and Homeland Defense (J-34); chief of naval operations staff as air warfare special programs requirements officer (N88); as battle director at the Combined Air and Space Operations Center Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar; U.S. Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain as chief of staff and maritime operations center director, and as executive assistant to the chief of naval operations.

His awards include the Legion of Merit, the Joint Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal and various unit and service awards.



*Updated: 7 May 2018*

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# BIOGRAPHY

*UNITED STATES NAVY*

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS

CAPT Shannon H. Kopplin , JAGC, USN



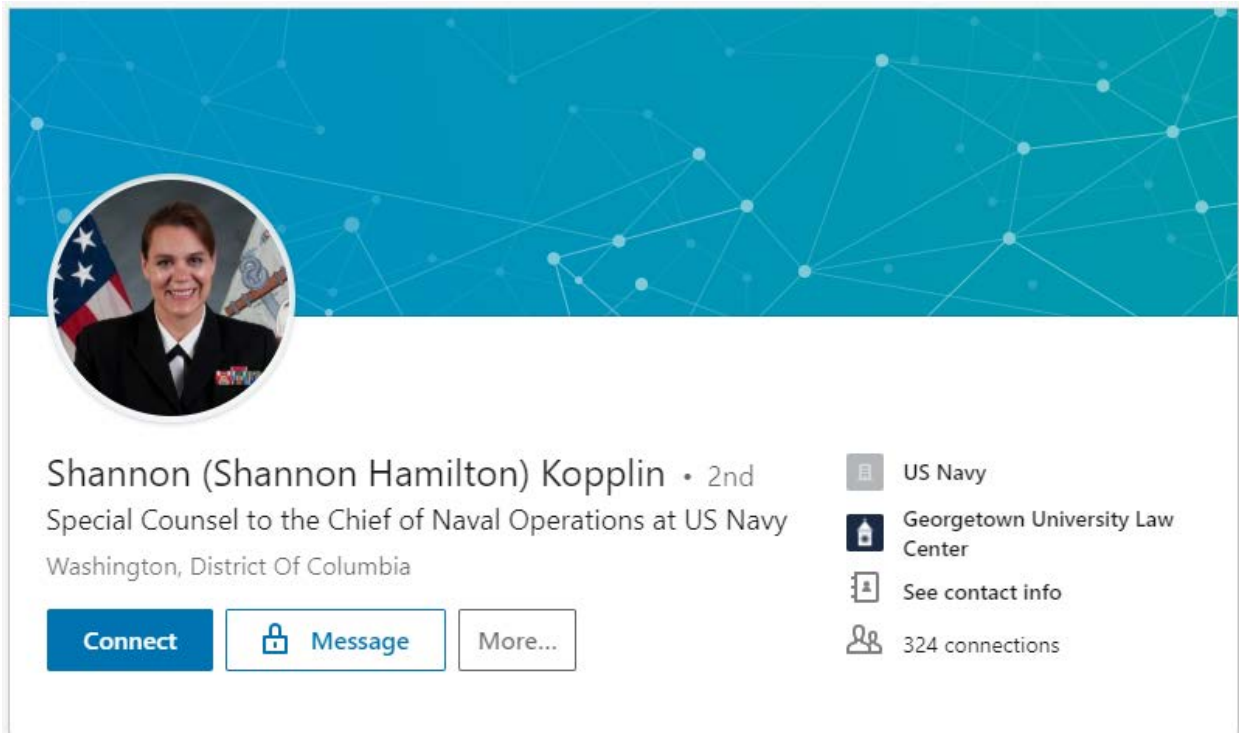
Captain Shannon Kopplin assumed command of Naval Justice School on 30 June 2015.

A San Francisco Bay Area native, she received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Davis. She earned her Juris Doctorate and certificate in international environmental law from Santa Clara University School of Law and her master of laws in International and Comparative law (with distinction) from Georgetown University School of Law. She is licensed to practice by the Supreme Court of the State of California, the Northern District Court of California, and the Western District Court of Washington

Her ashore and headquarters assignments include Defense and Trial Counsel, Naval Legal Service Office Northwest Detachment Whidbey Island; Senior Trial Counsel, Trial Service Office West, San Diego, California; International and Operational Law Attorney in the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Code 10); and Executive Assistant to the Deputy Judge Advocate General/Commander, Naval Legal Service Command.

Her afloat and staff tours include Staff Judge Advocate, Fleet Activities Okinawa, Japan; Staff Judge Advocate, Fleet Air Mediterranean, Naples, Italy; Deputy Legal Advisor, Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Information, Plans and Strategy); Battle Force Judge Advocate, Carrier Strike Group Five/Battle Force U.S. Seventh Fleet embarked in USS George Washington (CVN 73), Yokosuka, Japan; Fleet Judge Advocate, U.S. Third Fleet, San Diego, California; Force/Fleet Judge Advocate, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet; and Force Judge Advocate, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/U.S. Naval Forces Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet.

Her awards include the Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (three awards), Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal (six awards) and the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards).



The image shows a LinkedIn profile for Shannon (Shannon Hamilton) Kopplin. The header features a blue background with a white network pattern. On the left is a circular profile picture of a woman in a US Navy uniform. To the right of the picture, the name 'Shannon (Shannon Hamilton) Kopplin' is followed by '• 2nd'. Below the name is the title 'Special Counsel to the Chief of Naval Operations at US Navy' and the location 'Washington, District Of Columbia'. Underneath the title are three buttons: 'Connect' (blue), 'Message' (white with a lock icon), and 'More...' (white). To the right of these buttons is a list of affiliations: 'US Navy' (with a flag icon), 'Georgetown University Law Center' (with a building icon), 'See contact info' (with a document icon), and '324 connections' (with a group of people icon).

Shannon (Shannon Hamilton) Kopplin • 2nd  
Special Counsel to the Chief of Naval Operations at US Navy  
Washington, District Of Columbia

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US Navy  
 Georgetown University Law Center  
 See contact info  
 324 connections

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shannon-kopplin-b069845/>

-----Original Message-----

From: Sears, Christina H LT CHINFO, OI-3

Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2018 5:10 PM

Subject: FOR RELEASE: Fitzgerald Officer pleads guilty at Special Court-Martial

Update to Hearings for USS Fitzgerald Collision Release Date: 5/8/18

On May 8, 2018, the Navy arraigned and accepted a plea from Lt. j.g. Sarah Coppock, a junior officer from USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62), during a special court-martial aboard the Washington Navy Yard. The accused pled guilty to a violation of Uniform Code of Military Justice, Article 92 (Dereliction of Duty).

By pleading guilty today, Lt. j.g. Coppock has accepted responsibility for the role she played in the USS Fitzgerald collision. In addition to the court-martial conviction, Lt. j.g. Coppock was sentenced to forfeitures of one half-month's pay for three months and punitive letter. The pretrial agreement contained a waiver by the accused to waive her right to an administrative discharge board.

Our Sailors personify honor, courage, and commitment. The Navy will not accept complacency, negligence, or other behaviors contrary to its core values.

The Navy has taken and continues to take fair and decisive action after the catastrophic loss of seven shipmates. It also is taking corrective measures to prevent a tragedy like this from occurring again.

V/r,

LT Christina Helenaleka Sears, USN  
News Desk Officer  
Navy Office of Information (CHINFO)  
1200 Navy Pentagon, Room 4B463  
Washington DC, 20350-1200  
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Enclosure HH